

## **Formation Process of Expectations and Satisfaction of Construction Design and Build Service in Surakarta, Indonesia: The Perspective of Construction Service Users**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The rapid development of infrastructure in Surakarta has triggered high demand in the construction industry. Ongoing urbanization and rapid population growth are key drivers, creating the need for housing projects, public facilities, and improvements in transportation infrastructure. Despite the rapid economic growth and infrastructure development in Indonesia, particularly in Surakarta, significant progress has been made in the construction sector. However, increased demand has also brought about intense competition, especially in Design and Build projects. This research specifically aims to understand the processes related to the formation of expectations and customer satisfaction in Design and Build construction projects in Surakarta. The research methodology employed is qualitative with a descriptive approach, and data is obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data sources include relevant parties involved in the use of Design and Build construction services in Surakarta, Indonesia. Descriptive data analysis is used to present the data in a descriptive manner. The findings of this research indicate that the pre-purchase stage in construction services involves needs identification, information search, and alternative evaluation. Risk analysis, especially in functional, financial, temporal, physical, psychological, social, and sensory dimensions, is crucial in the decision-making process for potential users of construction services. Preferences for service dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy also significantly influence the selection of service providers. The ability of construction service providers to identify and manage risks, including the principles of 'The Flower of Service', also affects customer satisfaction.

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, with the rapid economic growth and continuous improvement in infrastructure development in Indonesia, including Surakarta, there has been significant progress in its infrastructure development. Alongside the encouraging national economic growth, this city has experienced rapid advancements in its infrastructure development [1]. The extensive infrastructure development has created a high demand in the construction industry in Surakarta. Key factors driving this demand include ongoing urbanization and rapid population growth, necessitating the construction of housing, public facilities, and improved transportation infrastructure. Additionally, according to data from the Department of Public Works and People's Housing in Surakarta, Indonesia. The flourishing business and industrial sectors have also led to an increased demand for commercial and industrial projects [2].

However, the high demand in the construction industry, especially in Design and Build projects in Surakarta, has also created intense competition among construction service providers. To achieve success in this challenging construction industry, construction service companies must maintain a sharp focus on customer satisfaction. Construction service providers need to prioritize customers by paying attention to their needs and desires, and delivering satisfying services. According to Lovelock & Lauren Wright [3], customer

satisfaction plays a crucial role in building customer loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal and continue using the services of the same provider in the future [3]. Thus, to achieve success in this challenging construction industry, construction service companies must maintain a sharp focus on customer satisfaction. Construction service providers need to prioritize customers by paying attention to their needs and desires, and delivering satisfying services. According to Lovelock & Lauren Wright [3], customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in building customer loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal and continue using the services of the same provider in the future [3].

In this context, customer satisfaction involves the difference between expectations and performance [4]. According to Kotler, customer satisfaction is the level of an individual's feelings after comparing the performance or results they perceive with their expectations. In this case, consumers can experience one of three general levels of satisfaction: if performance is below expectations, customers will feel dissatisfied; if performance meets expectations, customers will feel satisfied; and if performance exceeds expectations, customers will feel highly satisfied [4]. If the experience exceeds expectations, customers tend to feel satisfied. Despite efforts to implement these factors in the construction environment of Surakarta, there are still challenges in achieving maximum customer satisfaction. Local differences, regulations, and market dynamics require a more contextual and focused approach to understand how customer expectations are formed and ensure that their satisfaction is met. Considering the limitations of previous research that paid less attention to the Design and Build aspect in Surakarta, this study aims to fill this gap.[3].

In the field of construction [5] Several previous research findings indicate that the process of enhancing customer satisfaction is closely related to the performance of construction service providers in the respective projects. This study suggests that owners and consultants should select contractors based on financial and technical criteria. Contractors should also pay attention to the quality of service provided, maintain effective communication with customers, and introduce relevant innovations [5]. Additionally, Forsythe (2015) measures client satisfaction by identifying the gaps between their expectations and satisfaction with those expectations, with a primary focus on the following five dimensions of service quality: 1). tangibles (reliability); 2). reliability; 3). responsiveness; 4). assurance, and 5). empathy. However, Forsythe (2015) prioritizes the first two dimensions mentioned, namely reliability and tangibles [6].

Based on the research by Oda and Momen and Forsythe, aspects such as job quality, timely project completion reliability, acceptance, and effective communication with customers are the primary concerns in ensuring customer satisfaction in construction projects [5], [6]. In a study conducted by Alshihre and Fawaz, focusing on customer satisfaction from the perspective of construction service providers, project managers interviewed in this research shared insights into the factors needed to achieve higher client satisfaction levels. They agreed that effective team leadership, project monitoring, good communication, timely feedback, as well as experience, knowledge, and interaction with stakeholders, significantly contribute to client satisfaction. These findings are consistent with previous research stating that project manager experience, knowledge, behavior, intention, and attitude positively impact project completion, costs, product quality, and customer satisfaction [7].

From various studies mentioned above, there are several potential factors that can influence customer satisfaction in construction projects, including job quality, pricing, project completion time, and communication between construction service providers and customers. Additionally, other factors such as workforce skills and expertise, effective project management, and the use of appropriate technology can also contribute to customer satisfaction in construction projects. In Indonesia, data on customer satisfaction in construction companies in Surakarta from 2021 to 2023 show fluctuations in customer satisfaction scores. Despite the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOP) in project execution, varying satisfaction levels indicate underlying issues that require further investigation [8]. Fluctuations in customer satisfaction suggest that there are factors influencing clients' perceptions and evaluations of the quality of services provided by the company. There may be a gap or difference between customer expectations and the value provided by construction service providers. Therefore, the objective of this research is to explore the process of forming customer expectations and satisfaction in construction projects from the perspective of construction service users in Surakarta, Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to understand the meanings contained in phenomena, explore the unique conditions, build a deeper understanding of the researched phenomenon, and sometimes even discover new hypotheses that can be tested in the future. This approach aims to delve into a profound understanding, identify unique characteristics, construct a framework for the phenomenon, and sometimes generate hypothesis ideas [9]. The data collection technique in this research involves triangulation, combining multiple methods such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. The data obtained in this study tends to be qualitative, in the form of text, narratives, or images, and data analysis is done inductively or qualitatively.

To meet the data needs obtained directly from the research subjects, this study involves research informants considered relevant. For the perspective of service users, individuals using construction services

for both renovation and new construction are selected as informants. These service users interact directly with service providers, building experiences throughout the project.

Table 1. Research Informants

Participant Code	Interview Name	Interview Date
P1	Mrs. Asma (Construction Service Users > 500 jt)	02 Nov 2023
P2	Mr. Arif (Construction Service Users < 300 jt)	02 Nov 2023
P3	Mrs. Hani (Construction Service Users > 400 jt)	09 Nov 2023
P4	Mr. Donis (Construction Service Users > 1M)	14 Nov 2023

Sourche : Researcher's Analysis (2024).

Moreover, to accommodate the need for available data or reference sources, this research utilizes published literature, particularly from accredited journals, both domestic and international. These sources encompass topics such as user satisfaction and construction management.

In this research, data analysis is conducted by organizing data, compiling it into manageable units, synthesizing data to discover relevant patterns and key insights, and drawing conclusions that can be explained in the discussion. The data analysis process occurs sequentially and continuously, requiring continuous reflection on the data, analytical questions, and brief notes throughout the research. Detailed steps of data analysis include interview transcription, segmenting sentences according to specific categories, labeling, and data coding [10]. It is important to note that data coding is a key step in obtaining a factual picture as part of qualitative data analysis and a technique for collecting and drawing psychological analysis conclusions from the data [10].

### 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. The Formation Process of Expectations in Decision-Making for Selecting Construction Service Providers

In understanding the decision-making process of construction service users, there are complex and detailed stages. In this subsection, we will delve further into how expectations are formed in the selection of construction service providers. This stage involves gathering information from various sources, conducting meticulous risk analysis, and assessing one's own ability to address potential challenges that may arise [3].

##### 3.1.1. Emergence of the Need for Residential Housing

Before reaching the stage of engaging a service provider, this process begins with the emergence of the need [11], for residential housing construction.

"...and my husband also works here, and God willing, it will be for a long time, so it means we also have a desire to build a house. I am not from Solo." Mrs. Asma P1

##### 3.1.2. Information Search Process for Meeting Residential Housing Needs

After this need arises, prospective construction service users will gather information from both internal and external sources [11].

"At that time in 2019, there were usually advertisements on Instagram, and I first saw it from there." Mrs. Asma P1.

"Because I heard it from my friend, he had a bad experience building a house." Mr. Donis P4

"But before that, we had rented houses three times, if I'm not mistaken, so we have some user experience about various things." Mr. Donis P4

To meet the need for residential housing, there are several options to consider [12], such as buying existing housing, buying land and building it themselves, hiring daily labor for the construction project, using the services of a contracted labor, relying on Design and Build services, and other options [13].

".....we were also offered by someone from Yogyakarta. Then, it's quite big, he sells land and builds." Mr. Arif P3.

"At first, we wanted to use a contractor's service, but it means we would still handle it ourselves." Mr. Donis P4.

"Now my father has built houses for three people, my brother, and my sister. Initially, he didn't believe it, he wanted to do it himself." Mr. Arif P3

##### 3.1.3. Analysis of Risks Arising During the Fulfillment of Residential Housing Needs

After obtaining information, potential customers will analyze the risks associated with residential construction. According to the interviewees, financial risk is one of the main aspects considered, related to the funds they will expend [3].

"...because later, besides the implementation aspect, the costs might swell." Mr. Donis P4.

"If you listen to friends' experiences, when building on your own, there is no detailed cost estimate, so the prepared funds end up increasing." Mrs. Asma P1.

In addition to functionality-related risks, risks related to the physical building, such as material quality and building quality, are also considerations for prospective service users.

"We absolutely had no idea about buying materials." Mrs. Hani P3

"looking for materials on our own, we don't know where to buy. Finally, we decided to use the services of a Builder."

The time required to build [12] is also a consideration that cannot be ignored by potential customers.

"Most people think that building a house takes a long time, but this is faster. However, there were some issues last time." Mrs. Hani P3

"Then, sometimes there are daily laborers who extend their projects, so it doesn't get finished quickly."

Mrs. Asma P1

Furthermore, sensory risks related to the visual aspect of the building they will own are one of the considerations. Lastly, psychological risks that may arise during the construction process [3], based on our observation, emerge in projects with a value exceeding one billion.

"Using a contractor's service might be easier, simpler." Mr. Donis P4

"I have been following Tukang Bangun on social media since 2019, and from there, I got to know about houses that are built, and they seem good." Mrs. Asma P1

After gathering information and analyzing potential risks during the construction process, the next step involves assessing the capabilities of prospective construction service users in addressing potential risks that may arise.

"Because I am completely blind in this construction." Mr. Arif P2

"Besides that, we also don't know what house construction is like, we are not familiar with it." Mr. Donis P4

### **3.1.4. Finding a Service Provider that Aligns with the Service Dimension Preferences of Prospective Service Users**

After considering these factors, prospective construction service users then seek additional information through social media or listen to recommendations from others to find potential service providers.

"Oh yes, at that time, we also searched. Then, there was someone from Solo, I forgot." Mrs. Asma P1

"Thank God, someone recommended it from my friend." Mr. Donis P4

After searching for potential service providers, prospective service users will consider which service provider aligns with their preferences in service dimensions such as clarity, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [3]. Their expectation is that the potential service provider can address the risks that may arise during the housing construction process or even provide added value [14].

"Then, we went to the office at that time to inquire. In the end, why can we be sure, if I'm not mistaken, it was the impression we got at the office." Mr. Arif P3

"The first factor we looked at was their portfolio, if you look at it, it matches some buildings that we think are good." Mr. Donis P4

"Then, customer service, communication, and all aspects related to customer service, the foundation must be strengthened there." Mr. Donis P4

"Now, what my wife was looking for was credibility, and then we were convinced to use the services of Tukang Bangun." Mr. Arif P2

"Because users... as I experienced, what they think is there's a sense of uncertainty, so the construction service has to reassure users so that they are not confused, so they are calm when building." Mr. Donis P4

"... when visiting their booth at an exhibition, they were not very friendly, Mas." Mrs. Hani P3

### **3.1.5. Evaluating and Deciding on the Use of Construction Service Providers**

After going through the evaluation process, the next step is to determine which service provider they will choose [15]. In addition to considering the factors mentioned, the influence of others or trusted individuals, especially partners, becomes a crucial factor influencing the final decision. Thus, the entire process involves a series of careful and wise steps to ensure that the decision made meets the expectations of prospective construction service users.

"So, for more expensive items, I trust my wife, especially since this is building a forever home. If the wife is okay, then I'm okay too." Mr. Arif P2

"Finally, my wife and I decided to use construction services, taking into account some of its risks." Mr. Donis P4

"So, it seems unnecessary to go back and forth to a more distant place." Mr. Donis P4

The decision-making process for prospective construction service users begins with the emergence of the need for residential housing, influenced by factors such as employment, living conditions, and the desire to own a home. Once the need arises, prospective service users gather information from various sources, including social media advertisements and recommendations from friends, to fulfill this requirement. Throughout this process, they consider options such as building on their own, using contractor services, or exploring other alternatives. The next step involves a risk analysis, considering financial aspects, building functionality, physical risks, time constraints, as well as sensory and psychological risks. Subsequently, the decision-making

process includes searching for a service provider that aligns with their preferences, such as clarity, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The influence of others, particularly partners, plays a crucial role in the final decision. The entire process entails a careful and thoughtful series of stages to ensure that the decision made meets the expectations of prospective construction service users.

### **3.2. Service Users' Perception of Customer Satisfaction Factors in Construction Projects**

In this subsection, we delve into key factors influencing customer satisfaction in construction projects. This analysis involves a profound understanding of how construction service users evaluate specific aspects that play a crucial role in their satisfaction.

#### **3.2.1. Fulfillment of commitments regarding services provided by construction service providers**

Perceptions of the construction service provider's ability and facilities to fulfill explicit and implicit service commitments become the primary focus. Project designs and tender/contract documents provide significant indications related to client expectations. For example, the implementation of 3D design technology plays a vital role in improving design accuracy, reducing discrepancies between expectations and final outcomes. However, flexibility in design changes during the construction process also influences customer satisfaction.

"It is implemented as per the design." Mr. Donis P4

"Even though I only check once or twice a week, the work can still proceed as planned." Mr. Arif P2

"At the beginning, we were given a 2D design. If we could also be given the 3D design, like other templates, it would be more attractive." Mrs. Hani P3

"Because in building, we sometimes suddenly change our preferences, like, what if we do it this way."

Mrs. Asma P1

#### **3.2.2. Construction service provider's ability to address risks arising during service fulfillment**

This research indicates that customer satisfaction after project completion is significantly influenced by the construction service provider's ability to identify and manage functional, financial, time-related, physical, psychological, social, and sensory risks. Findings show that aspects such as project cost, delivery time, and quality are some satisfaction criteria. Effective financial management helps contractors successfully complete projects and indirectly satisfies their clients [15].

"As per the budget." Mrs. Hani P3 "Because everything is in progress, it's more advanced according to us." Mr. Donis P4

"Then, looking at the iron, the iron turned out to be larger." Mr. Arif P2

Risks related to building functionality and physical aspects, such as ensuring the use of quality raw materials and an effective construction process, also impact customer satisfaction.

"Thank God, Tukang Bangun could interpret our wishes and create it from the design and everything." Mrs. Asma P1

"Then, the results are also as we expected." Mr. Donis P4

Furthermore, sensory risks related to the visual aspect of the building they will own are a consideration. Finally, psychological risks that may arise during the construction process are also taken into account.

"And thankfully, until finishing, it met our expectations. So, we feel thankful for using construction services." Mr. Donis P4

"So, we're not too worried." Mrs. Asma P1

#### **3.2.3. The Flower of Service" enhances positive impressions of construction service users**

Construction service providers successful in applying 'The Flower of Service' principles, such as providing information, facilitating ordering, explaining consultations, emphasizing friendliness, and providing additional services beyond procedures, successfully strengthen positive impressions on construction service users [3], [15]. To get full value from any service experience, customers need relevant information. New and potential customers, in particular, require information.

"Firstly, because the QC always reports, today what construction will be done, and when it's finished, it's also reported." Mr. Arif P2

The order-taking process must be friendly, fast, and accurate so that customers do not waste time and experience unnecessary mental or physical effort.

"Yesterday, even though the queue was a bit long, we waited for the design for months." Mr. Donis P4

"From the beginning to the end, we were accepted well, and maybe it was facilitated well too." Mrs. Hani P3

Consultation is an additional service that enhances and involves a dialogue to identify customer needs and develop personalized solutions.

"As a beginner with no experience at all, suggestions about the house, how it should be, what it should contain, I think that's still lacking." Mr. Arif P2

"For example, today we ask, maybe in the afternoon or evening, there has already been a follow-up, there has been an answer to the problem." Mr. Donis P4

The quality of a company's friendliness can enhance or decrease satisfaction with the core product.

"We asked Mr. Tukang, maybe in the beginning, it was a bit uncomfortable or something." Mrs. Hani P3

"When we were here checking everything, it was friendly." Mr. Donis P4

### 3.2.4. Additional variables that play a role in customer satisfaction

In addition to the previously outlined factors, our study identified several additional variables that contribute to shaping customer satisfaction in construction projects. Some of these factors include [3]:

**Quality of Human Resources:** The quality and competence of the project team from the construction service provider are critical factors influencing customer satisfaction. The ability, experience, and professionalism of the workforce can directly impact the project's final outcome and the customer's perception of the service provider [12].

"From the workers and their leader, the leader seems very experienced." Mr. Donis P4

"...work ethic, their integrity is good." Mr. Donis P4

"Ms. Arsi can meet my wife's needs, like that." Mr. Arif P2

**Internal Coordination of Construction Service Providers:** The level of coordination among units or departments within the construction service provider's organization plays a crucial role in ensuring the smoothness and efficiency of the project process. Internal misalignment can cause problems and obstacles that can harm customer satisfaction [12].

"At the beginning, there were indeed some things I noted about the site manager and the office's executor, there were some missed things." Mr. Donis P4

**Involvement of Suppliers and Partners of Construction Service Providers:** It can be understood that the involvement and reputation of suppliers and partners working with construction service providers are also customer considerations. The reliability and quality of work from these third parties can have a significant impact on customer satisfaction [3].

"Then, for material suppliers, maybe they can be increased because some things are important, not all users ask for the same thing. Sometimes, there are requests that are a bit peculiar." Mr. Donis P4

"...can it only be in one ceramic store, for example, last time we were in Rojo, well, there is none in Rojo. Then, for example, from the selection, there is none, then there are other alternatives, like that."

Mrs. Asma P1

**Satisfaction of Third Parties:** If third parties, such as government or supervisory agencies, give positive assessments of the construction service provider's performance, it can increase customer trust and satisfaction. This factor reflects how well the service provider meets applicable standards and regulations.

"Many friends who came here said, 'Wow, the house is good.' So, it makes me feel happy." Mrs. Asma P1

"When my father took me there to see, oh, it turns out the result is beyond expectations, better than the plan from my father." Mr. Arif P2

"Supported by my father's comment earlier, yes, I increasingly believe, sir." Mr. Arif P2

**Bonuses and Incentives:** Bonuses, incentives, or other perks given by construction service providers to customers can have a positive impact on satisfaction. This factor reflects the service provider's efforts to provide added value and appreciation for the trust given by customers.

"Getting a bonus is quite significant, maybe during Eid, it also adds to customer satisfaction." Mr. Arif P2

Therefore, it can be concluded that understanding customer satisfaction in the construction industry not only requires a profound understanding of the technical aspects of the project but also involves complex human and managerial aspects. Customer satisfaction not only creates a positive relationship between construction service providers and users but also contributes to the reputation and sustainability of the business in the future. Therefore, the implementation of best practices in design, risk management, customer service, and internal and external collaboration is key to achieving optimal customer satisfaction levels in construction projects.

### 3.3. Consumer Behavior of Construction Service Users After Being Satisfied with the Performance of Construction Service Providers

This subsection will discuss the consumer behavior of construction service users after experiencing satisfaction with the performance of the construction service provider. Understanding how this satisfaction influences consumer actions and decisions has a significant impact in the context of the construction industry in Surakarta, Indonesia [3].

After experiencing satisfaction with the final project outcome, consumers tend to exhibit specific behaviors. Some aspects to be discussed involve maintaining long-term relationships with the service provider and the potential to recommend the service provider to others [7].

### 3.3.1. Additional variables that play a role in customer satisfaction

Consumer behavior in this context also includes how they express their satisfaction, whether through positive reviews, testimonials, or active participation in recommending the construction service provider to others. The analysis of this behavior will provide insights into the extent to which customer satisfaction can be a key driver in building a positive reputation for the service provider in the construction industry.

"Recommend" Mrs. Husna P1 "I immediately recommended it to my friend." Mr. Arif P2

"Many people ask, 'Which one did you use?' I also tell them. If someone asks how it is, well, it's good, I say that. We help promote it, sir." Mrs. Hani P3

"So, I might recommend what's in this house to friends who ask about building a house; I recommend that." Mr. Donis P4

It is important to explore how consumers engage after feeling satisfied because this can shape the brand image of the construction service provider and have an impact on the sustainability of their business [3]. By understanding consumer behavior after a positive experience, construction service providers can design more effective marketing and customer service strategies to retain and enhance customer satisfaction in the future. The importance of exploring how consumers engage after feeling satisfied can also be seen from a marketing and customer service perspective. Construction service providers who understand how consumers interact and express their satisfaction can design more effective marketing strategies. Additionally, responsive customer service focused on post-project consumer satisfaction can help maintain and improve consumer satisfaction levels in the future. In the context of the construction industry, it can be found that consumer satisfaction not only influences long-term relationships but also affects future purchasing decisions. Satisfied consumers are more likely to return to providers who have previously provided satisfaction, rather than seeking new providers. Therefore, understanding post-satisfaction consumer behavior can be key to building customer loyalty and ensuring long-term success for construction service providers.

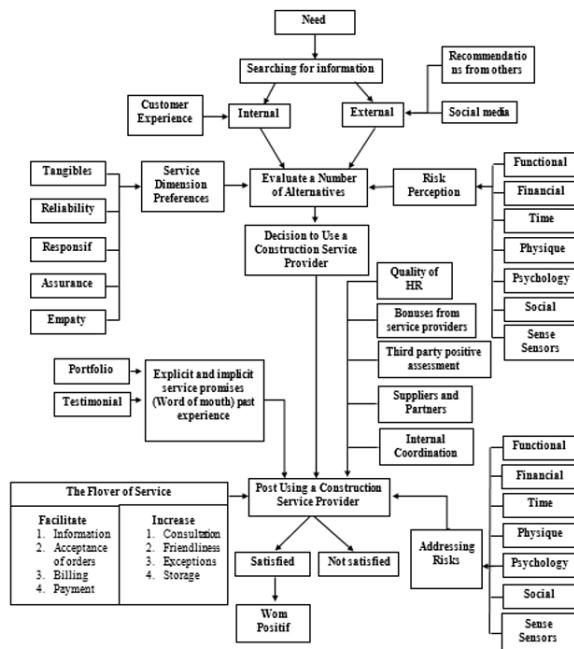


Figure 1. Process of Forming Customer Expectations and Satisfaction

## 4. CONCLUSION

In facing rapid economic growth and sustained improvements in infrastructure development in Indonesia, particularly in Surakarta, significant progress has occurred in the construction sector. This rapid growth has created high demand for the construction industry in Surakarta, driven by ongoing urbanization and rapid population growth. However, this increased demand has also led to intense competition among construction service providers, especially in Design and Build projects in Surakarta. To achieve success in this challenging construction industry, construction companies must prioritize customer satisfaction.

The process begins with the emergence of the need for housing, influenced by factors such as occupation, living conditions, and the desire to own a home. Prospective service users gather information from various sources, including social media advertisements and recommendations from friends, to meet these needs. In the information search process, they consider various options, such as self-construction, using a contractor's services, or other alternatives. Risk analysis is the next step, involving considerations of financial aspects, building functionality, physical risks, time, as well as sensory and psychological risks. Subsequent

decisions involve seeking service providers that align with preferences, such as clarity, reliability, responsiveness, guarantees, and empathy.

The importance of fulfilling service promises, the ability to manage risks, and the implementation of 'The Flower of Service' principles are also highlighted in this research. Additionally, supplementary factors such as the quality of human resources, internal coordination of construction service providers, involvement of suppliers and associates, and third-party satisfaction also play a role in shaping customer satisfaction. After experiencing satisfaction with the final project outcome, consumers tend to exhibit specific behaviors, such as maintaining long-term relationships with service providers and the potential to recommend service providers to others. A profound understanding of consumer behavior after positive experiences is key to designing effective marketing and customer service strategies, aiming to maintain and enhance customer satisfaction and build a positive reputation in the construction industry.

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