

The Power of Positivity: Fueling Customer Participation to Boost Satisfaction

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The Managerial Dilemma

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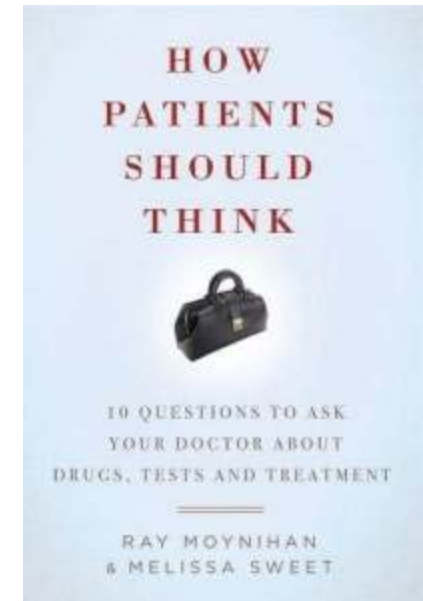
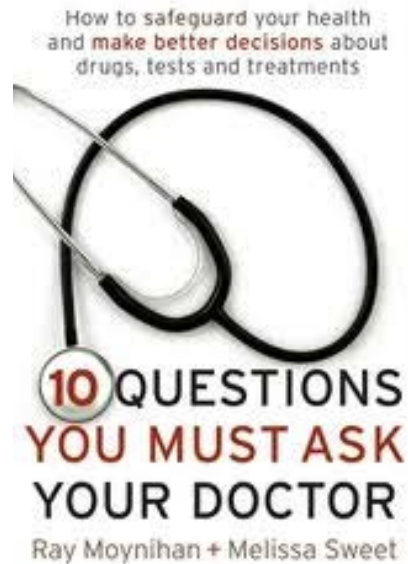
- Customer *participation* in service interactions benefits both customer and firm...
- But customers often don't participate at optimal levels



A recent study shows that 96% of patients have serious concerns or fears regarding their health care experience.



Patients don't always participate...



The Research Objective

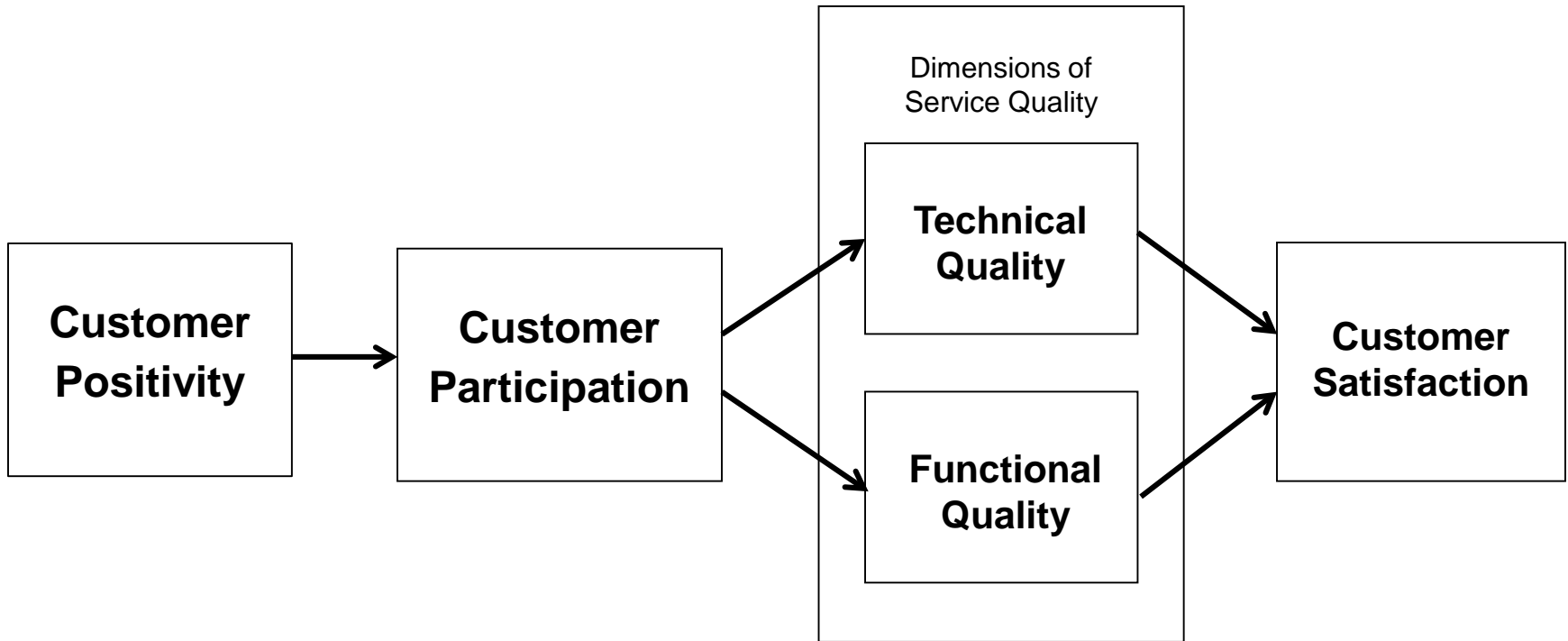
- To investigate how customer emotional states affect participation levels and perceptions
- To identify ways service providers can better manage customer emotional states

The Study and Its Results

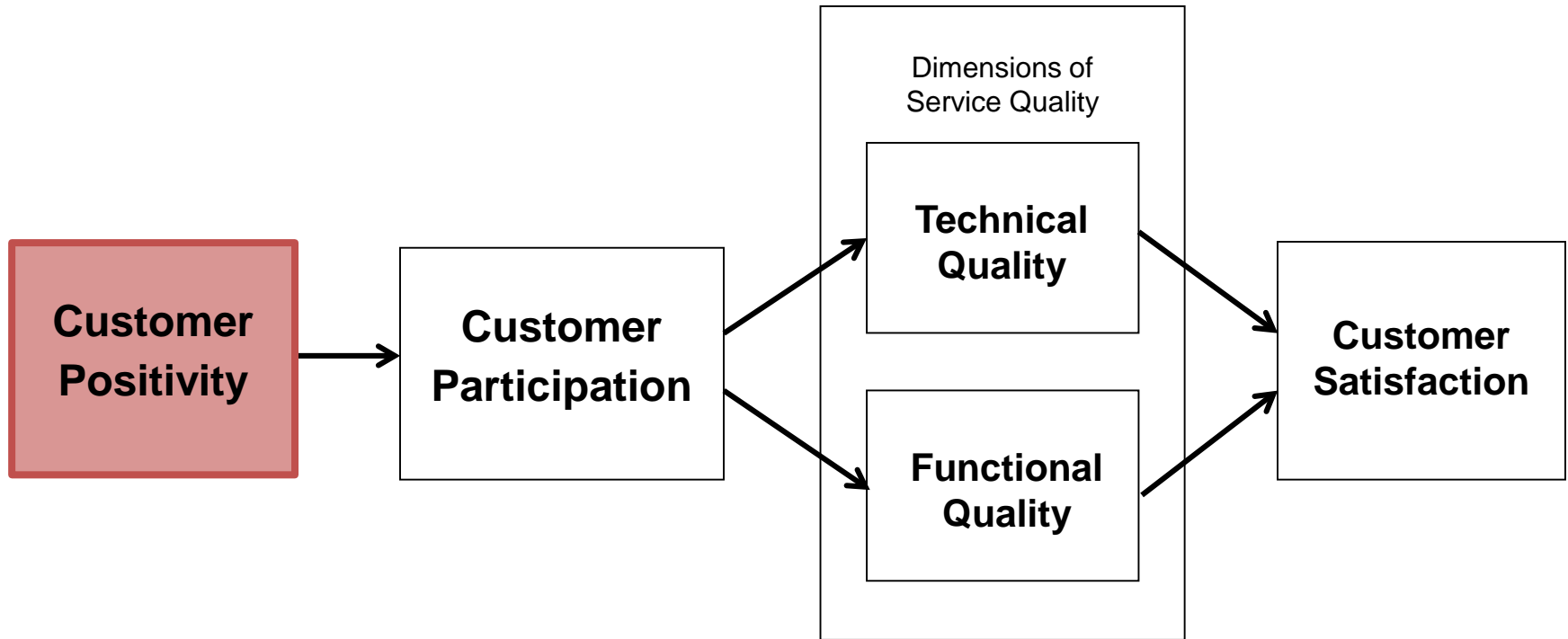
The Study Context

- Data collected via telephone survey
- Patients at a tertiary-care medical center

Conceptual Model

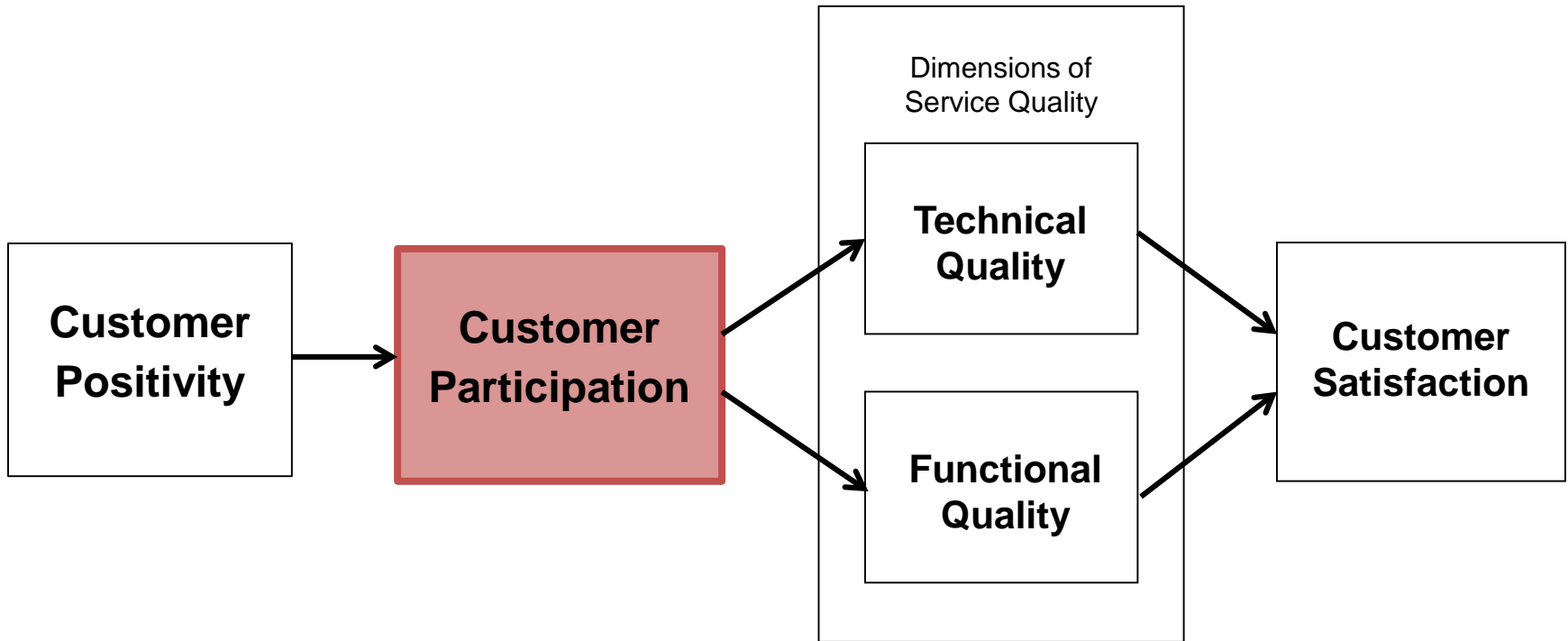


Conceptual Model



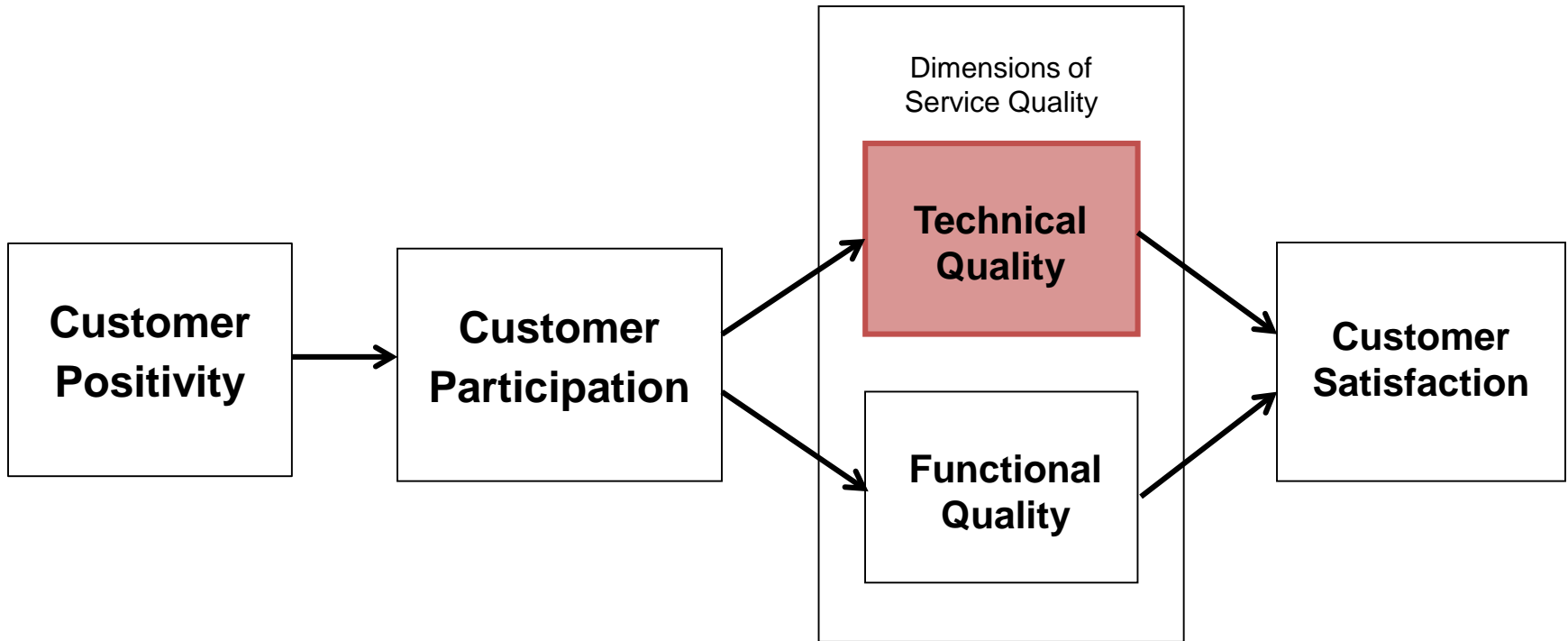
- **Positivity:** ratio of positive to negative emotions in a particular customer state

Conceptual Model



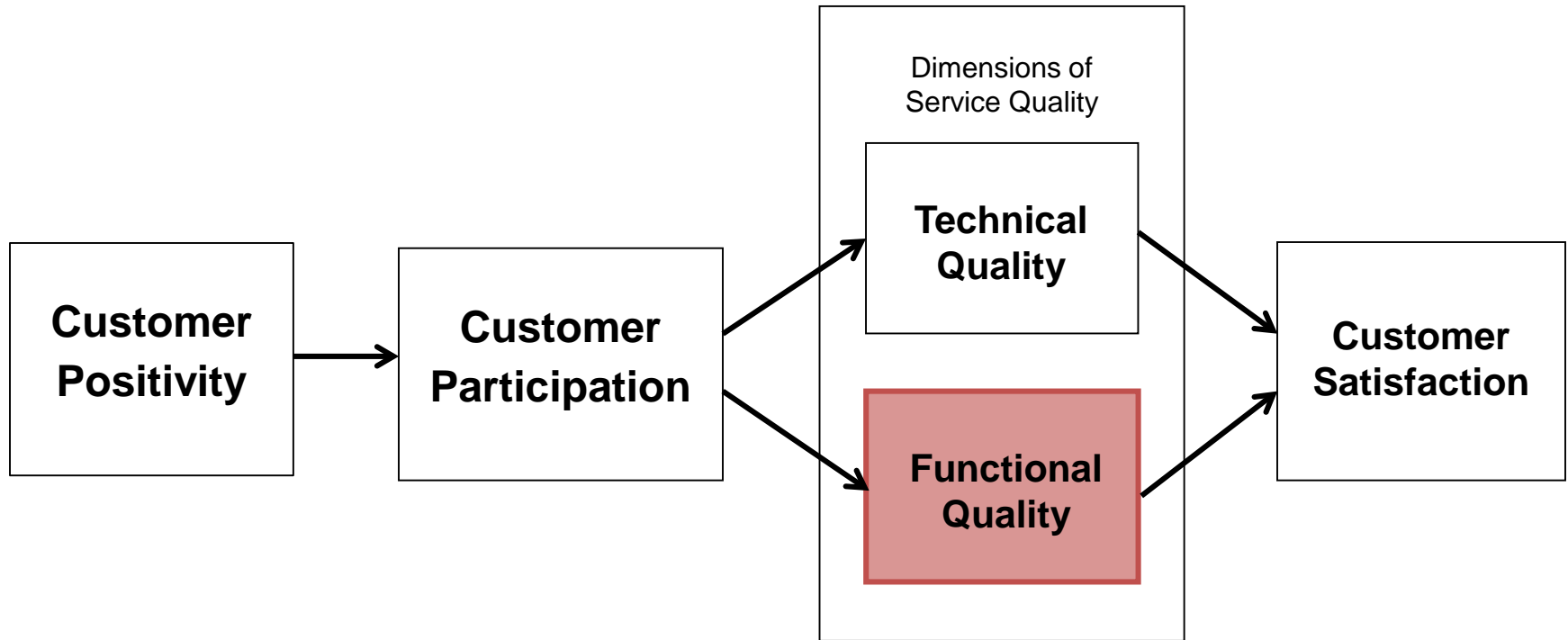
- Participation: “the extent to which customers share information, provide suggestions, and engage in shared decision making.”

Conceptual Model



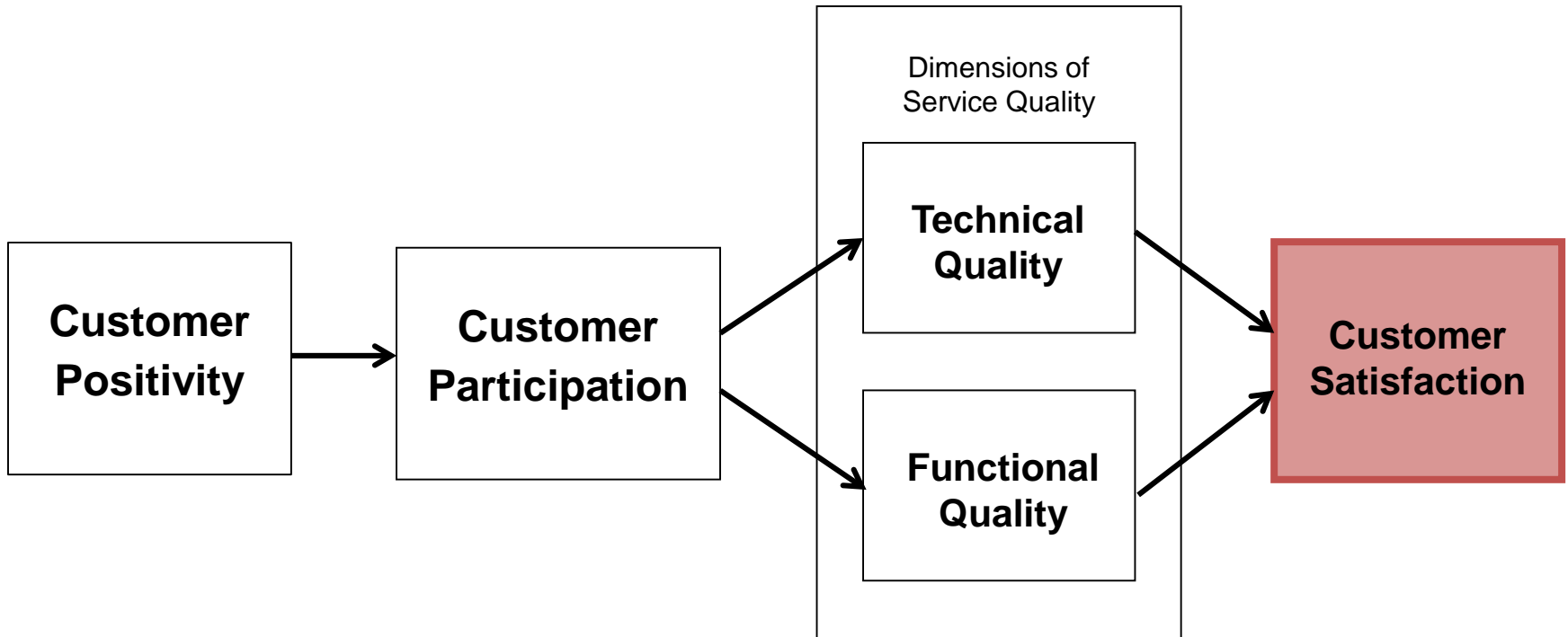
- **Technical Quality:** The “what” of the service
 - Medical/clinical quality; Expertise, proficiency

Conceptual Model



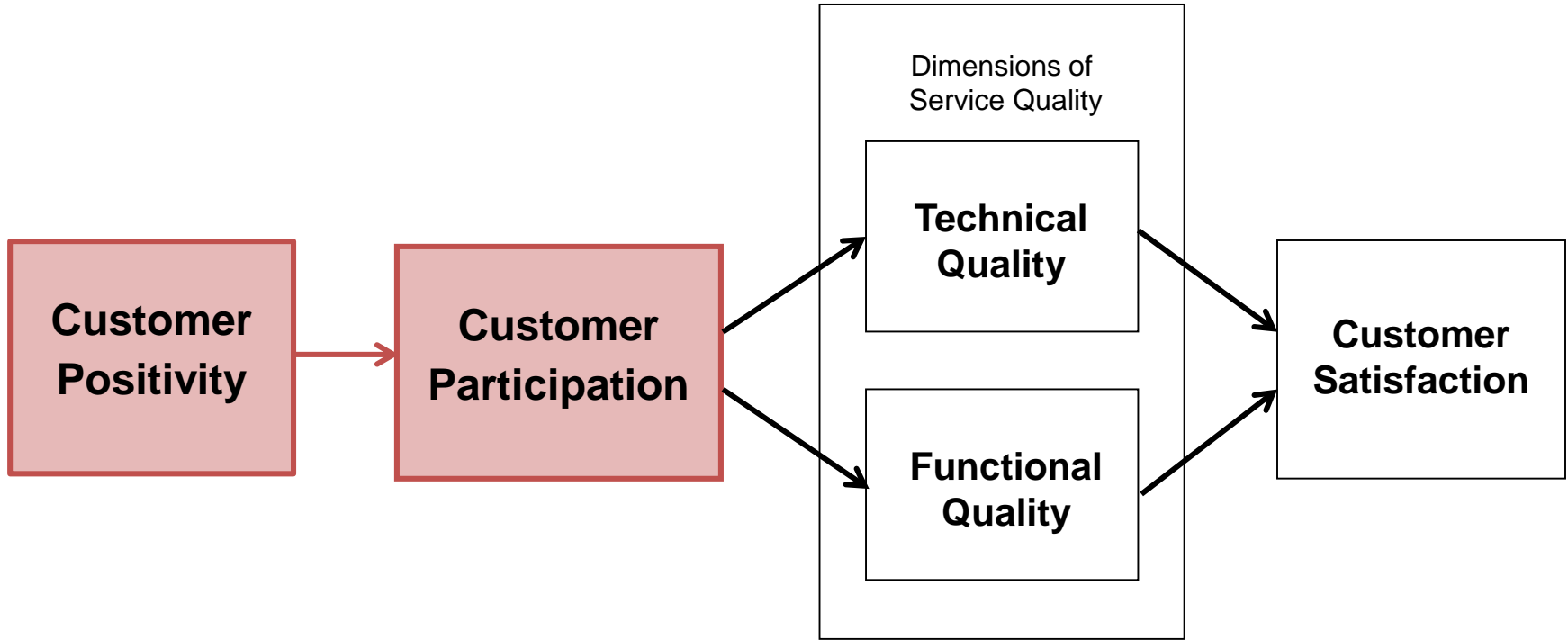
- **Functional Quality:** The “how” of the service
– Customer service; Interaction quality

Conceptual Model



- **Customer Satisfaction**
 - Connected to loyalty, positive WOM

Results



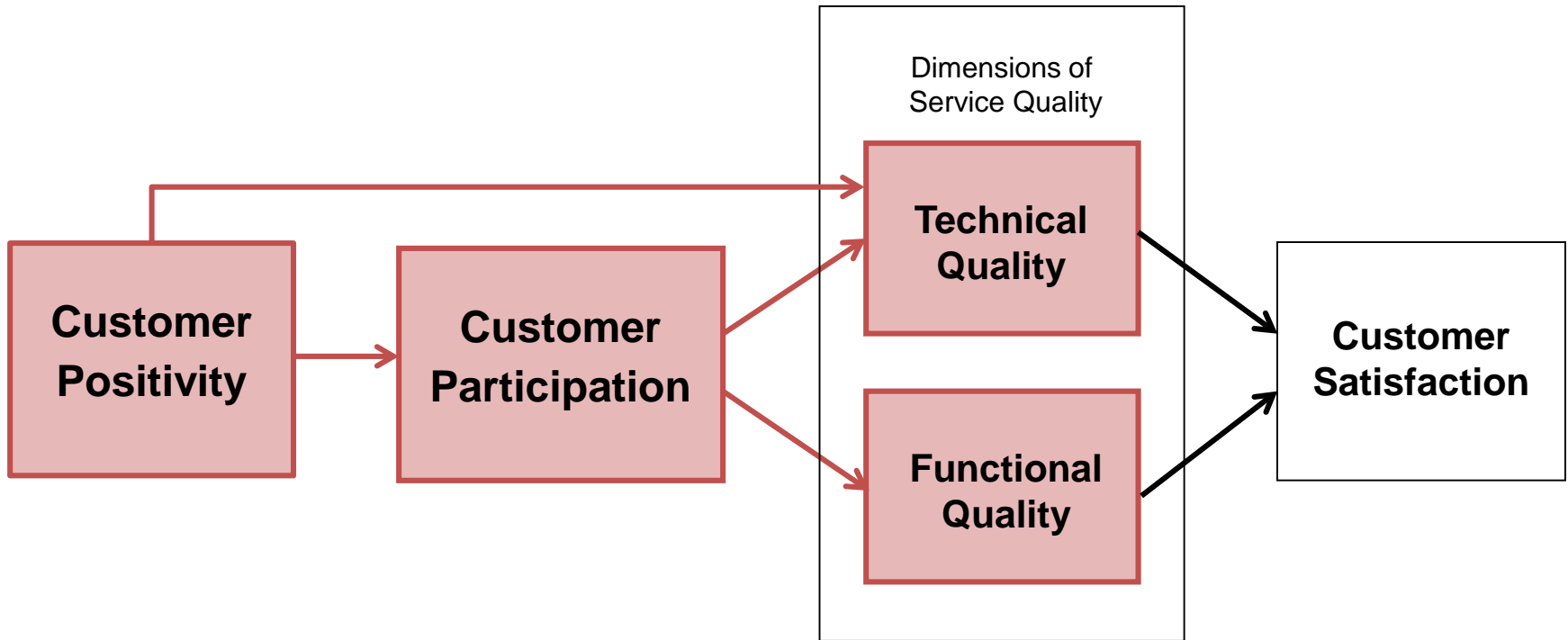
Positivity is associated with higher levels of customer participation.

Positivity Leads to Participation

- Positivity Results
 - 64% of patients had positive emotional index
 - Despite a high perceived disease severity (mean of 5.87/7)
- “Broaden-and-Build” Theory of Positive Affect
 - New to marketing and services context
 - Individuals attempt to improve their psychological well-being—and thereby their physical health—by evoking positive emotions leading up to “moments of truth” to cope with negative situations
 - Positivity leads to modes of behavior that prepare an individual for difficult situations
 - Positive emotions function as efficient *antidotes* for the lingering effects of negative emotions.

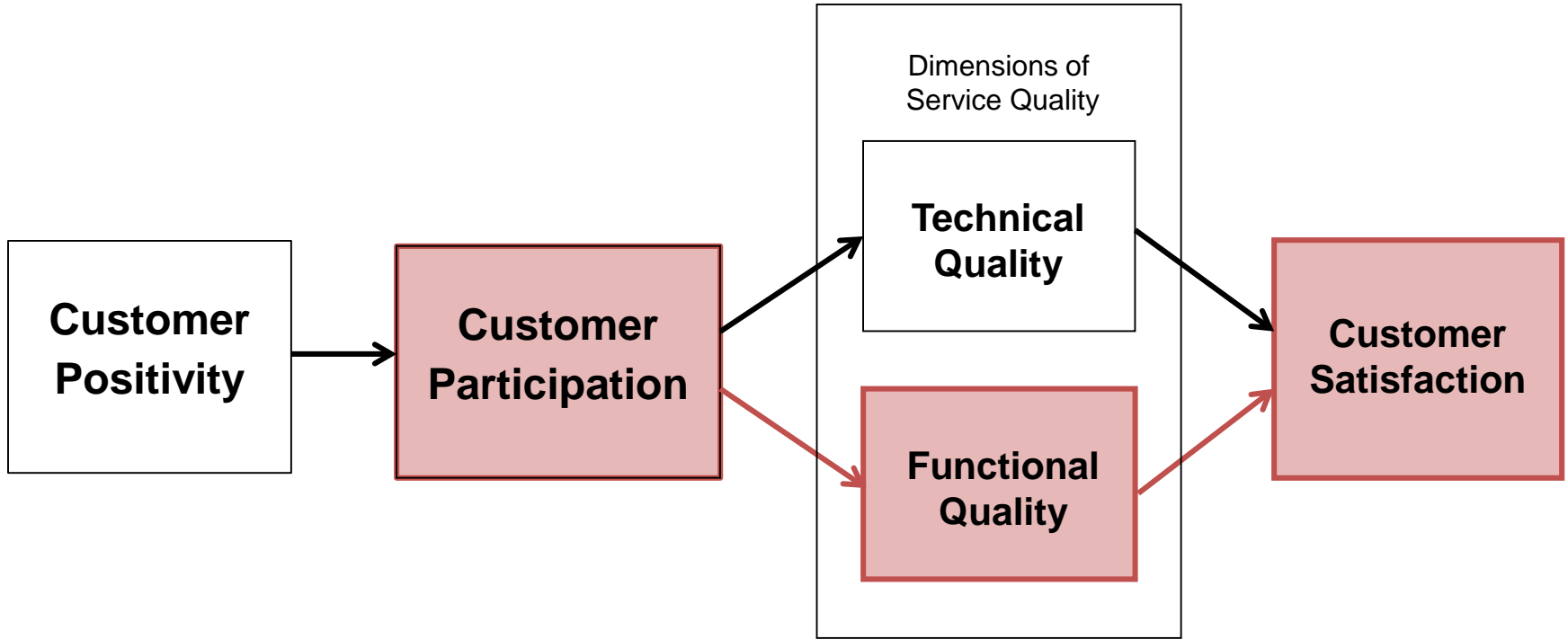
Source: Fredrickson (2001) etc.

Results



Customer positivity is linked to technical and functional quality through participation.

Results



Customer participation is linked to satisfaction through functional service quality.

Summary of Results

- Customer positivity increases participation
- Increased positivity and participation boost customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction
- *Now, what can managers do to capitalize on this power of positivity?*

Implications and Recommendations

Implications for Health Care

- HCAHPS Metrics
 - VBP
 - Medicare Reimbursement
- Mayo Clinic:
 - Collects patient questions at beginning of visit
 - Utilizes them to gain a better proactive understanding of patient conditions
 - Physically
 - Emotionally
 - Intellectually

Community General Hospital
More than medicine

HCAHPS Patient Satisfaction

| | HCAHPS Ques | CGH 12-Month Period Ending | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|----------|------|
| | | Dec 2008 | Jun 2009 | Diff |
| Nurse communications | 1 | 71% | 75% | 4% |
| Doctors communicate | 2 | 77% | 80% | 3% |
| Patients helped | 3 | 58% | 62% | 4% |
| Pain controlled | 4 | 63% | 70% | 7% |
| Meds explained | 5 | 57% | 58% | 1% |
| Room clean | 6 | 56% | 58% | 2% |
| Room quiet | 7 | 45% | 49% | 4% |
| Discharge info | 8 | 80% | 83% | 3% |
| 9-10 rating | 9 | 60% | 63% | 3% |
| Definitely recommend | 10 | 64% | 68% | 4% |
| Period 1: Jan - Dec 2008 | | BETTER | | |
| Period 2: Jul 2008-Jun 2009 | | WORSE | | |

HCAHPS = Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems



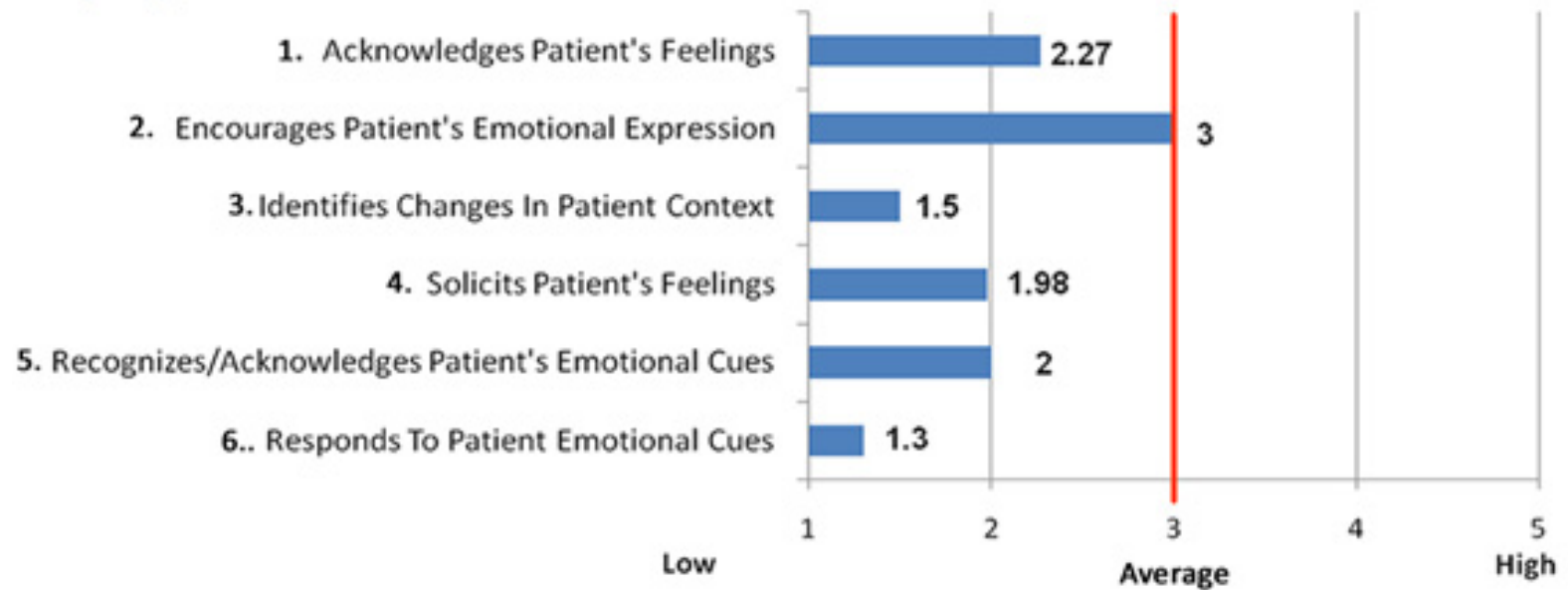
"When we want your opinion,
we'll give it to you."

Action Items

- Advance & Facilitate Communication
 - Collect customer information, preferences, level of expertise
 - Communicate hope and optimism
 - Cocreate expectations, plans
 - Patient communities?
- Be Aware of “Moments of Truth”
 - Allow for customer inputs
 - Account for emotional states: facilitate open conversations
 - Cocreate a “road map” for future behaviors, decisions

Encourage Patients' Emotional Expressions

Empathy Skills Measured:



In some markets, physicians are not adequately trained or supported in encouraging, responding to, and facilitating patients' emotional expressions. "Clearing the air" of anxieties and negative affect may allow patients to move forward with decision-making and more informed states of minds.

Source: Wilkins, Stephen, Smart Health Messaging: "2013 Physician-Patient Communication Benchmark Report"

Action Items

- Physical Spaces
 - Comforting: colors, scents, sounds
 - Assistance with navigation, way-finding
 - Facilitate privacy and intimacy
 - Encourage emotionally empowered patients

Design of Physical Spaces



Cypress Vine



MOVING HEDGE

Greenworks' Moving Hedge is the first self-watering plant wall on wheels – a multi-functional, living piece of furniture.

- Benefits**
The densely planted Moving Hedge is an effective air purifier for all kind of indoor environments. Plants naturally improve air quality by increasing humidity and boosting oxygen levels, which helps preventing common problems like dry skin and headaches. Also, the four-layered felt gives Moving Hedge significant sound absorbing qualities.
- Customization**
Moving Hedge can be whatever you want it to be: An eye-catching, wild jungle for your conference room or a sober, silver-toned backdrop for your reception. Be inspired by one of the suggested themes or make room for your own ideas.
- Flexibility**
The smooth running wheels make Moving Hedge a versatile piece of furniture, which quickly changes the function of an indoor space. Put them in a row to screen off a section or place them in an angle to create a refreshing green spot in your room.
- Maintenance**
Thanks to the integrated self-automated watering and nutrition system you do not need a green thumb to take care of your Moving Hedge. Simply fill the container with water, set the timer and let it take care of itself. If this still sounds too demanding, a service agreement with a Greenworks partner can be arranged.

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Similarities with Other Services

- Financial/Legal Services
 - Tax Advising/Wealth Management
 - New Business Ventures
- Education
 - Maximizing Student Experiences
 - Eliciting the Best from Students
 - Creating Loyal Alumni
- Most Professional Services

Andrew S. Gallan, Cheryl Burke Jarvis,
Stephen W. Brown, and Mary Jo Bitner

“Customer Positivity and Participation in Services:
An Empirical Test in a Health Care Context”

Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science

(Forthcoming)