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# **An empirical investigation into customers perception of UK legal services and operations**

## **ABSTRACT**

Designing a service operation that aligns business systems and customer perception, experience and outcomes is an essential part of the customer value proposition for business. This paper examines this aspect within legal services by exploring the paradox between the perception of operational service quality and the legal judgements reached. The paper collates responses from 8,192 law sector customers, and proposes that legal services need to be reconfigured. Findings indicate that clients perceived poor operational value, but that this is perhaps due to their own lack of knowledge of the legal process. Through the development of a clear evidence base and a defined business model this research informs how an improved legal services could be operationalised. This would improve service quality from the customers perspective via efficiency gains through greater operational transparency and more effective communication from legal services.

### **Keywords:**

legal services; value proposition; client satisfaction; operational transparency

## **An empirical investigation into customers perception of UK legal services and operations**

### **Introduction**

The long-term success of any professional service often depends on the dyadic relationship, which exists between a supplier and a client (Broschak, 2015; Casidy & Nyadzayo, 2019, Ostrom et al, 2021). Arguably, customers have always demanded cost-effective services (Gottschalk, 2002), and with the advent of more online services, they also wish them to be effortless (Newton, 2017). Unfortunately, legal services have often been perceived as a conservative profession, frequently disrupted through iteration from client to lawyer, the court and legal system and back again to client. This kind of recapitulation can result in delay, as the decision-making process is compounded by uncertainty and complex decision making (Sieh, 2010; Bourke et al, 2019). Furthermore, a full-service law firms providing the complete suite of legal services often encounter the more operational challenges and service design (Goodale et al., 2008; Giannakis et al., 2018; Clegg et al, 2019).

In terms of creating greater transparency of legal services, we turn to the original concept of Customer Value Proposition (CVP) one of the most widely used terms in business (Anderson et al. 2006). CVP is considered a strategic tool for how a company communicates its aims to provide value to customers (Payne et al, 2017). CVP was developed by strategy consultants in the early 1980s seeking to overcome issues observed in product-oriented organisations (Lanning, 1998; Payne et al, 2017); and there is some evidence that CVP has made significant contributions to business performance (Payne et al, 2017). CVP can be seen as a strategic tool that could assist the service operations with law firms and the way provide value to their customers (Payne et al., 2017). For example, Lawyers utilize such legal systems that capitalise on their knowledge of law and legal experience providing higher-level insight into legal practice from both a tangible (procedural perspective) and intangible perspective (Law and Kim, (2005) such navigating as the legal system (Ackroyd, and Muzio 2007; Breivot, et al, 2014). Lawyers possess the fullest possible understanding of how their client's perceive

quality of service that the lawyer provides in their understanding of legal practice, and they should use that insight to develop the simplified methods for customers' to comprehend the meaning of value and satisfaction in changing service environment. From the operational perspective, clients often seeking legal advice or representation continually, but are also conscientious of their value for money and are no longer accepting of being charged by the hour (which technology has facilitated) demanding greater price transparency of lawyer's contribution to their case (Maheshri and Winston, 2014; CMA, 2016). In simple terms, lawyers should use this insight to develop the simplified methods for delivering value and satisfaction in legal service, riddled with levels complexity and advocacy (oral reasoning) behind the each case. In this article, we answer the following questions: RQ1: What are the determinants of satisfaction in dealing with legal cases; RQ 2: What are the implications to the legal service sector in terms of the CVP and alignment of operational business systems? This empirical investigation explores the customer value proposition (CVP) and connects client expectations with service quality, reflecting on customer opinion. A CVP-legal conceptual framework is constructed which draws on the client's perspective of legal services and how law firms can support CVP by improving service delivery.

## **Literature Review**

The goal of the lawyer is to provide a client with maximum satisfaction (Cochran, 2017). For instance, when a decision is to be positioned in legal statement, the client-centred lawyer and the client would prepare/draft a list all the alternative courses of action and the consequences of each point on a piece of paper. Originally, William and Felstiner (1981) stated that clients are a bundle of rights and liberal theory, suggesting the lawyer should become more and more independent. They also suggested that lawyers generally develop autonomous modes of practice, while the client would also identify their choice/instruction to a particular line of enquiry (Cochran, 2017). Furthermore, Cochran, (2017, p259) went on to say "client-centred lawyers claim of being neutral, is in fact the decision-making framework that steers the client toward making self-serving choices". Despite the

fact that the legal sector has grown steadily over the last 10 years, 3.3% year upon year, compared to 1.2% growth in the UK economy (Michalakopoulou, et al, 2021). There has also been an abundance of law firms taking action to revitalise the sector to optimise their service innovation through new business procedures and processes (Desyllas et al, 2018). Overall, this suggests that law firms improve their system use in order to increase their operational transparency; it requires internal resources to come become more transparent of their service delivery (Spring et al, 2022). But this is not to suggest that Law firms are maintaining their service provision through the adoption of new technologies. We suggest that law firms all also need to consider the scope of satisfaction across the profession, not just through their own service delivery but across the network as a whole. our contribution to the provision of legal services in the UK is to show the interaction of CVP across the scope of legal matters that may disrupt the service provision from a consumer perspective. Maister, (2003) originally categorised professional services under three core pillars: 1) service, 2) satisfaction, and 3) success. However, operating across these three pillars is a time-consuming process and often requires common ground of advising and understanding, of which a trust relationship emerges when client expectations are met (Six and Sorge, 2008). These ways of operating have also been viewed as somewhat dysfunctional, repetitive and even unorthodox for legal practitioners (Collier, 2016), as the external influences require legal firms to reconsider their operations in response to the challenges of new entrants. These three core pillars have put law firms under pressure structurally and financially as they have had to find new ways of managing the client's expectations, such as trust, commitment and attraction are part of what draws clients to specific practitioners (Hill et al., 2009; Baumann, Le Meunier-FitzHugh & Wilson, 2017).

Whatever innovations are occurring in terms of improving service provision, it is the customers' perspectives and opinion that is considered the most important element which can affect operations management strategies and decisions (such as service quality, value, customer satisfaction, price, firm image, and customer loyalty (Payne & Holt, 2001, Hong & Goo 2004; Lewis & Brown 2012, Balthu & Clegg, 2021). With institutional change, such as the legal services act in 2007, the

anticipated ‘big bang’ but became more of a sleeping giant with the evolution of the Alternative Business Structure (ABS) creating a new array of Alternative Service Providers (ASPs) at their disposal through the use of new technology, process, and/or low-cost labour to offer free paying clients a variety of legal services at dramatically lower costs and often online, making them attractive to clients (Bennett, 2014). Creating various online legal offerings that promised faster and more cost-effective legal services. In 2018 there were 12,000 legal firms, with 1,300 operating ABSs in England and Wales, (Law Society, 2018). Unfortunately, the legal system does not produce 100% satisfied customers, as the system itself judges the quality of the case being presented (Hulpus et al, 2015). The outcome is often determined by the quality of the argument, in other words “you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear’ (Swift, 1801, p,357). With law firms’ focusing on their overall efficiency (in terms of: charge out rate, billable hours, development hours (Brivort et al., 2014).

The effectiveness of legal services often resides around the execution of precedents, client management, controlling their workload demand (minimising those non-value adding activities) and business development, (Brivort et al., 2014). However, empirical evidence also suggests that a proportion of legal services are not actually driven by customer’s needs, but rather by the lawyer seeking clarification or instruction (Harris and O’Malley, 2000; Garry, 2008) or even how organisations conceal the quality of service (Harris and Ogbonna, 2010) of customer complaints, service failure, through to the dynamics of service recovery (Grégoire and Mattila, 2021). Morimer and Pressey, (2013) explained that clients find it difficult to evaluate the quality of such services, even after they use them. On the positive side the legal profession itself is responding to the demand of innovation and new methods of working, such as the transparency of billing (Huang and Rust (2018), Perner, 2020) and improving client engagement Balthu, and Clegg (2021), Michalakopoulou, et al. (2021) specifically in the context of legal services has been sparsely researched with exceptions of few works published regarding firms and market perspective. However, one of the key disruptors to the profession is now the notion to litigate in person, and in the literature is very rarely questioned the harmonics of legal design and innovation (Bourke, et al, 2020).

## *Legal Operations*

The legal profession itself is also responding to the demand of innovation and new methods of working (Michalakopoulou, et al, 2021; Clegg, et al, 2021, Spring et al 2022). In terms of guardrailing the innovations, solicitors are also obliged by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (Chapter 1 SRA Code of Conduct 2011) to provide the client with regular fee estimates and regular understanding of the cost of disbursements involved in their file. Not only is accurate time recording driven by regulatory needs but also fundamentally by factors such as fee earner utilisation (actual hours billed/total hours available) and firm's profitability.

Unfortunately, resistance to changing a lawyers behaviour is also apparent, such as the acceptance and adoption of AI capabilities in legal service provision, specifically, in the realms of legal advisory, legal operations, legal technology, and consulting (Armour & Sako, 2020). By addressing the the market and firm perspective in line with the scope satisfaction, the game-changing technological innovations is an emerging theme as firms consider the cost-benefits of the monetary, social and psychological costs; plus, the benefits of legal technologies and traditional firms from both clients' and lawyers' viewpoints. (Hongdao et al, 2019). These enabling perspectives is sumamrised in table 1. The enabling perspectives from lawyer to client offers a deeper understanding into the legal process, whichever enables the client to move into a deeper understanding of the legal practice, but also gardrails the client's understanding of the legal argument.

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 Insert Table 1 about here  
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This collabourative enquiry is similar to the principle of an access-based services, engaging the customer for co-creation in line with the resources currently available (Payne et al., 2017; Rintamäki and Saarijärvi, 2021). For instance, Akbar (2019) suggested that the community sharing ease of access can stress the value-in-use, specifically the ongoing issue of access to justice (Burridge

and Gill, 2020) and reforming the process (Budzinski, 2019). To add to the mix, the adoption of innovation is required because firms integrate new approaches technologies during the delivery of services, enhance the services that they provide and satisfy their customers (Chen, Tsou & Ching, 2011; Skálén et al., 2015) but also a sustainable service ecosystems (Ostrom et al, 2021). This ecosystem is also embracing the use of technology can help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customer solutions, client instructions or provide an entirely novel approach to fulfil the client's needs but also, the well-being of the customer. For example, Liinamaa et al, (2016), highlighted that legal contracts are barriers to be overcome by legal sales when implementing value-based selling or pricing strategies, as different customers have varying decision-making sequences and processes, conceptualised in figure 1.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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We argue, specifically, that a service framework that maps customer satisfaction in respect to their legal issues is absent. We propose to address this gap through the following. First, we throw light on the firm-level challenges and opportunities from a market perspective. Second, we advance CVP in a primarily research-based framework which incorporates additional elements of knowledge transfer and best practice exchange.

## **Methodology**

In order to explore and investigate the phenomenon of CVP (Payne et al., 2017) and the scoping of the customer satisfaction of legal services (Palihawadana and Barnes, 2004; Malhotra & Morris, 2009; Cochran, 2017), the research design is one of the critical factors. Our study is based on 'abductive' logic (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013), where the key objective is developing or refining theories and models, whilst combining insights from the data which lies outside the initial theoretical frame (Lonsdale et al, 2017).



We collected our data from two different sources: Legal Service Board and IPSOS Mori, on behalf of the Law Society. To gauge articulation of satisfaction in Legal Services, we downloaded all the consumer panel data, excluding amended documents, from the Legal Services Board website ([www. https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/research/lrb-survey-data](https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/research/lrb-survey-data)) filed for the period 2015–2019. The data from IPSOS Mori polls is well regarded by professionals in the Legal sector (e.g., Mortimore et al, 2017) and has been utilized in developing government and policy advice (e.g., Masood, 1999). The sample considers 8,192 individual respondents who have had at least one legal issue in the preceding four-year period (2015-2019). While this may not be wholly representative of the wider population, it remains to date the only large-scale data set of its size; hence interrogating the data using statistical methods led to some interesting results which can be verified in further works where the quality of the sample can perhaps be refined. While the decisions regarding the levels of satisfaction with legal services and experimental self-service and legal services, there are a number of features of the data to consider.

The most frequent problems were with consumer rights issues, property purchases, wills, issues relating to relative deaths, and disputes with neighbours being the categories with the largest numbers of overall cases. The survey was designed asked respondents how satisfied they were with the resolution of their legal dispute on a Likert scale from Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied. The difference between the proportion of respondents selecting either of the top two choices was subtracted from the bottom two choices in each category, that is for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  category:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{netsatisfied}_i &= \text{verysatisfied}_i + \text{fairlySatisfied}_i - \text{fairlydissatisfied}_i \\ &\quad - \text{verydissatisfied}_i \end{aligned}$$

The higher this score is the more satisfied respondents were with their resolution. At this point it is necessary to split the respondents into three groups (as the survey did):

- Those who sought legal advice “Got Advice”
- Those who tried to deal with the issue themselves “Self-Solving”

- Those who did neither and let the issue take its course “Did Nothing”

The questions asked of the respondents relate to 29 sub-classes of legal activity, presented in Table 1, with follow up questions asked in detail regarding the experience of, and resolutions reached by, respondents with reference to their legal issues (see table 1). There exists very little empirical evidence on the determinants of satisfaction with services in the legal profession. That which does exist, such as Patterson, Johnson and Spreng (1996), tends to focus on longitudinal surveys from the business-to-business case of legal services. Furthermore, perceptions of fairness and satisfaction in lawyer–client interactions either from a young person’s perspective (Peterson-Badali et al 2007; Chui and Cehn 2017;), customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ricker, 1996).

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 Insert Table 2 about here  
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### *Building the regression model*

In addition, the flexibility of any regression modelling undertaken here is limited by the fact that observations are only available at a grouped level. This reduces the sample size, and thus the degrees of freedom. The data as available is only reported at grouped, rather than individual levels, which does restrict the analysis available. However, it is still possible to use the data to draw pertinent inferences from it regarding the experience and satisfaction of legal services users. Issues affecting econometric models of the type presented here with small samples are further discussed in Gujarati (2015) or Wooldridge (2016). Despite these restrictions we use the available data to build a model and investigate the relationships between variables for the 29 classes of legal action. In the modelling here we utilise a common Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) framework, incorporating the usual assumptions which are inherent in such an analysis, as per Gujarati (2015) and Wooldridge (2016).

There are a number of features of the data to consider. The most frequent problems were with consumer rights issues, property purchases, wills, issues relating to relative deaths, and disputes with neighbours being the categories with the largest numbers of overall cases.

## Results

The summary of the descriptive statistics presented here are a small sample of the extensive results; however, they highlight a number of potential issues for investigation in particular the kind of legal services on offer across the 29 categories. In terms of the frequent problems, we then examined the satisfaction of the legal service available and compared it with customers overall satisfaction, focusing three themes: (i) consumer rights issues, (ii) property purchases, wills, issues relating to (iii) relative deaths, and (iv) disputes with neighbours, with neighbours being the categories with the largest numbers of overall cases. Our results focused on the mean number of cases (four) varied considerably across categories, e.g. 3.79 for house purchases and 8.89 for problems with squatters. The fact that these averages across these formentioned themes (i) consumer rights issues, (ii) property purchases, wills, issues relating to (iii) relative deaths, and (iv) disputes with neighbours being the categories with the largest numbers of overall cases) may indicate that those respondents have on average over one legal issue per annum, perhaps indicating a respondent group who are relatively active in this area. In Table 2 we report a number of summary statistics for the 29 categories of legal cases covered by the Law Society (2016) data and then consider a number of interesting features of this data.

The difference in the net satisfied statistics across these groups will, therefore, represent the difference in the satisfaction between these groups. Notably in 25 of the 29 groups the net satisfaction was at least as high for the self-solvers, (self representation) than it is for those who obtained legal advice. The single biggest category difference between these two groups was 0.35, for “Other personal injury that was not your fault”, 4 other groups also exhibited differences of more than 0.2, including disputes with neighbours, discrimination, consumer problems and issues with mental health

issues. The findings also indicated that in these areas the legal profession does not seem to be providing a better service than individuals felt able to provide themselves. For example, respondents seek advice for more complex legal issues and so may be less satisfied as a result of their unfamiliarity with the area of law. Whereas individuals who feel more confident in handling the issue themselves it may also be because they better understand the potential outcomes of the issue and so are more likely to be satisfied with the outcome. Of the areas in which net satisfaction was better after seeking advice the differences were much smaller than might be expected with the biggest difference being of 0.05 in the category relating to problems with obtaining the correct benefits or student loans. Unsurprisingly, those that sought legal advice were much happier with outcomes than if they had done nothing, with only one category indicating a preference for inaction which related to issues relating to squatters. Our analysis takes into account the number of respondents being more satisfied with outcomes provided through their own efforts compared to people who had recourse to the legal profession. We therefore utilise the OLS framework to model those categories with the largest numbers of overall cases (consumer rights issues, property purchases, wills, issues relating to relative deaths, and disputes with neighbours being) in terms of performance of self-solving agents and the legal profession.

***Model 1: The differences between satisfaction with self-service and legal services***

The first model is aimed at determining the differences in performance of self-solving agents and the legal profession, following on from the results of the summary statistics section. Hence for a specific category we define a difference in net satisfaction score as:

$$\Delta satisfaction_i = netsatisfied_{i,self\ solving} - netsatisfied_{i,got\ advice}$$

Using this variable as the dependent variable in our OLS model we then select a number of other variables which may, or may not, be causal factors for determining the difference in satisfaction levels between these two groups. Our OLS model is defined as follows:

$\Delta satisfaction_i$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 NP_i + \beta_2 NoContact_i + \beta_3 ULP_i + \beta_4 Aware_i + \beta_5 NSself_i + \beta_6 Wage_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where NP is the number of problems in the category, NoContact is the proportion of respondents who have never sought legal advice, ULP is the proportion who felt they understood the legal problem, Aware is the proportion who were conscious of the legal advice available to them, NSself is the level of self-satisfaction for self-solvers in this model, and Wage is a weighted average of the age of respondents based on the mid-points of the age groups as defined in the data. The reason for including the variables is that they represent the legal awareness and knowledge of responders in the areas being considered, as well as the level of satisfaction, with their own solutions and age included as a control variable. It may be expected that the higher the level of satisfaction is with self-solutions the harder it will be for a legal professional to be expected to outperform these. The results of the regression estimation are presented in Table 3.

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 Insert Table 3 about here  
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In addition, a QQ plot of the residuals of this model is provided, which shows that the observations are not far away from being normally distributed in figure 2.

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The results show that four of the six selected parameters are significant at the 5% significance level; the two parameters, which are not significant related to understanding of the legal problem and awareness. Part of the problem with these variables is that they measure in some way the same thing, which is related to whether or not someone has used legal services before. It is notable that there is a positive estimate of the parameter on NoContact, which implies that those where fewer people have

contacted the legal service providers before, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their own solution, rather than that of the law professional. As perhaps expected, the difference tends to be higher in categories where the self-solution was doing quite well in relative terms, which made it more difficult for the legal profession to outperform the independent actors. The results here are only indicative of the general trends in the data, however they raise a number of questions regarding why it is self-solutions to legal problems that seem to be considered more effective, even if they are not in practice, compared to those utilising legal services. The results also identify some interesting areas of future research in the statistical analysis of data sets of the type compiled by the Law Society (201x). The interpretation may indicate a relationship between expectations and satisfaction, one which has been considered in other contexts but not widely considered in the context of legal services (c.f. Palazzo et al., 2014, Swan and Trawick (1981) and Wirtz and Bateson, 1999).

***Model 2: Determining Satisfaction with Legal services***

As an alternative to the difference in net satisfaction scores considered above, we could also utilise the OLS method to consider a model for determining satisfaction with Legal Services alone. In doing so the satisfaction of self-solvers does not seem causally relevant, as those accessing services will, by definition, not have solved the problem themselves. This leads to the model suggested below:

$$netsatisfied_{i,gotadvice} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NP_i + \beta_2 NoContact_i + \beta_3 ULP_i + \beta_4 Aware_i + \beta_5 WAge_i + \epsilon_i$$

The results of this second model are reported in Table 4, along with the associate QQ plot in Figure 3. The results show that all variables, with the exception of awareness of the legal profession are significant at a 5% significance level.

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Interestingly, those areas where respondents have more problems are likely to be less satisfied, as are those where more people made no contact with the legal profession previously. This second result could indicate that areas where there is less familiarity with legal services lead to a greater dissatisfaction with the services provided. This also seems consistent with the positive sign of the parameter acting on the variable describing those who understood the legal problem. These results could be taken to consider whether the expectations of users of legal services might be a significant factor in satisfaction with outcomes.

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 Insert Figure 3. about here  
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## **Implications and conclusions**

The aim of this research was to gain a greater understanding of the CVP of legal services. Specifically, the legal services that require greater operational transparency through conceptualising Legal Services Customer Values Proposition as a tool.

### *Theoretical Implications*

The research contributes to a deeper understanding of CVP in the context of legal services, we utilise the dimensions of marketing knowledge: i) customer knowledge, where law firms have to gain a deep understanding of client's situation in order to be able to provide the best service (Shah et al. 2006); ii) competitor knowledge, law firms need to know what their competitors offer in order to be able to offer a superior service to customers. However, the determinants of customer satisfaction remains under investigation the service quality for those who support the notion to legal technologies for those seeking legal advice. This research has confirmed that it is essential that law firms move away from traditional unstructured provision, such as the transfer of specialised knowledge in a high-cost manner (Michalakopoulou, et al, 2021) and greater transparency of what a client knows, and what a client

needs to know about their legal journey, in order to manage their expectations in order to maintain the levels of satisfaction in the service delivery. By understanding the customer's satisfaction across 29 legal cases (See Table 1) through sense checking the client's confidence in the legal system in which they have to comply. Specifically, focusing of RQ1: the determinants of satisfaction in detailing with legal cases? To date, no other CVP research has been identified the perception of legal services. Previously Sharma, Lucier and Molloy (2003) originally suggest that customised legal solutions are often tailored to each customer, often requiring higher levels of client involvement to ensure successful craftsmanship, application, and client satisfaction for successful product delivery (Michalakopoulou, et al, 2017).

The confirmation that 5% (409) respondents claim an understanding of the legal problem and awareness with legal services lead to a greater dissatisfaction with the services provided from the 8,192 respondents. The challenge for most lawyers is to balance the delivery of 'complex, unstructured legal services, whilst meeting a particular client's unique need' (Bettencourt et al., 2002, p. 101). In support of this view, empirical evidence presents the importance of why internal knowledge and work-based human capital (Scott-Kennel and Von Batenburg, 2012) requires a higher knowledge intensity (Reid et al, 2016; Desyllas et al, 2018). Sanchez, (2019) stated that the lawyer's journey through a number of key observations in terms of knowledge: i) Evaluating the needs of the clients, guiding them through the legal system, referring to the rules, procedures and norms embraced by the professional; ii) Relying information with clients, however holding the upper hand in terms of strategic decision making; iii) Having ultimate control, shaping disputes, whilst making sure client narrative's fit the needs of the case rather than shaping process options to fit the needs of the clients and subconsciously aware of the following uncertainties; iv) Self-reflection when failing to convert a potential client, losing a case, negative client feedback. For instance, the quality of the any legal provision often depends on the client's demands and expectations holding a robust argument or defence, as well as respecting the legal ethics (Zipursky, 2020). Ultimately, the quality of service is often determined by those members within the supply chain (barristers and external parties' expert



statements) produced by the individuals and the network of supporting legal services, such as pro-bono and legal aid.

Taking these ideas forward we therefore offer a Legal Services Customer Values Proposition based on the three Customer Value Proposition (CVP) perspectives proposed by Payne et al. (2017) (supplier determined; transitional; mutually determined) and Rintamaki and Saarijarvi, (2021). CVP is defined as ‘a statement of how the firm proposes to deliver superior value to customers and to differentiate itself from competitors’ (Webster, 1994, p. 60). Payne et al. (2017, p. 471) recommended three main CVP perspectives: 1) principally supplier determined, reflecting a value-in-exchange emphasis; 2) transitional, with recognition of the customer experience; and 3) mutually determined, reflecting a value-in-use emphasis. The transitional CVP perspective assesses the customers’ experience during usage (Morgan and Rao, 2003) and mutually determined CVP perspective suggests that value (quality of service) is co-created and distributed across the customer relationship (Day, 2011; Petri & Jacob, 2016). Payne et al. (2017, p.472) explained that the mutually determined CVP perspective ‘directs attention away from value that gets created at the point of exchange to consider how value is distributed across the customer relationship’. The customer’s knowledge and skills progressively developed during the usage provides directions and enhances the service value (Eggert et al., 2018).

In regard to RQ 2: What are the implications to the legal service sector in terms of innovation and future proofing the profession? This could be achieved through redefining firms’ perception of professionalism and optimising value-added provision for client. Payne et al. (2017) considered knowledge and innovation as antecedents of CVPs as these have a great impact upon customers’ expectation. In addition, Pires Dean and Rehman, (2015) used service logic to develop a process model of external parties in exchange with three phases (production, negotiation and usage). Although CVP has attracted significant examination, Payne et al. (2017) identified 590 references between 2006 and 2016, more theoretical and practical insights are needed (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Skålén et al., 2015; Chandler and Lusch, 2015).

In relation to the CVP in terms of legal services, the Legal eco-systems are changing in terms the value proposition being offered client seeking access to justice, as well as the high level of customer interaction and customisation of clients prepaid for a customised solution (Chase 1978; Rohit, 2000; Schmenner, 2004; Bamford and Xystouri. 2005; Lewis and Brown 2012; Schmenner, 2014). We develop the value creation model for legal services, extending Harvey's (2016) two core principles: i) Levels of customer contact: face to face via meetings, consultations, resulting in the consequent position statements or, court proceedings and; ii) Operational processes: making judgments about both ends of the process that are essentially fluid/flexible in principle.

### *CVP and Operational Transparency*

Previously, scholars such as Guzak and Rasheed (2014) and Giannakis *et al*, (2018) have also suggested that legal services offer standardised products, but that their services are able to attain unconstrained growth through increasing the volume of services, whilst offering customisation. Unfortunatley, complex services seem to be successful when they forego the option to grow. However, Covid 19 provided the disruption to engineer change (Suskind, 2022) prompting law firms to transfer their internal operations online and reconfiguring their service delivery for customers and clients in response to the challenges of regional lockdowns and self-isolation (McIntyre Olinjnyk and Pender, 2020). One significant contribution is the uptake of video linking and remote courts/online courts (Susskind, 2021), to the other extreme of in robot lawyering (McLeay et al, 2021), more superficially Robotics in Customer Service (Xia and Kumar, 2021). This disruption created opporunties for customisation and standardisation depending on the legal service offerings (Reid et al, 2022).

Our analysis of the literature has firms reflecting on their service provision on: (i) consumer rights issues, (ii) property purchases, wills, issues relating to (iii) relative deaths, and disputes given that much of the current innovation in enhanced service delivery. Of the game-changing technological innovations promise benefits from the monetary, social, and psychological costs. Furthermore, and

the use of machines and AI (McLeay, 2021, Choi et al, 2021, Spring et al, 2022) will develop both the efficiency and effectiveness of customer solutions, potentially providing innovative approaches to realising customer needs or offering a substitute alternative Xia and Kumar (2021) in customer service. There is also a fundamental need to improve the service quality and then satisfy customers' needs (Hong & Goo, 2004; Java et al, 2007; Cameran et al, 2010; Wilden et al., 2019). Specifically, when the consumer demands their access to justice and when they act in person, the self-lawyering client, but when they cannot afford or have limited knowledge of the know-how of legal services (Reid, et al 2016). Michalakopoulou, et al, (2021) suggested that forms help streamline the development of wills and contracts, which can provide greater value to clients at low cost and that technology supports the push to standardising service, these forms, often challenge the profession. Law firms need to devote effort to developing stable relationships with their clients rather than just meeting their financial targets. The exploitation technology-based legal services offerings that serve the lower ends of the market since they were unable to afford sophisticated legal providing relatively simple legal actions and resources (Nadimpalli, 2019), such as as advancement of Legal technologies specifically smart contracts and e-discovery.

This study suggests that despite the importance of customer satisfaction, the engagement process itself is somewhat undefined and lacks clear 'touch points' through the legal contract. Unlike other studied this study this framework offers a holistic view of the client's, perspective of the CVP, highlighting specific knowledge gaps and bespoke learning solutions for provision of legal services and theoretical contributions for client interaction are highlighted through a novel conceptual framework, conceptualised in figure 4. For example, a client visiting a lawyer for a legal matter must work closely with that attorney for a successful solution to the client's problem (Guzak and Rasheed, 2014). Schmenner (1986) stated that every knowledge-intensive service can be seen as highly customised. Corresponding to Nicholson et al. (2018, p.217) conceptual framework, our incremental contribution is determined against assessing existing knowledge and then developing further what is currently known.

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Insert Figure 4 about here

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## Reflections and Limitations

The size of the data set considered here would allow for these models to be estimated, potentially answering a wide range of questions, such as positive and negative affect of self-lawyering from both practical implications requires as well as public policy. However, we believe that the analysis conducted in this study offers a flavour of the benefits to be found in sharing such data more widely and utilising a range of analytical techniques. The results indicated that respondents sought advice for complex legal issues and were less satisfied as a result of their unfamiliarity with the area of law. Therefore, this study extends the work of previous studies e.g. Morimer and Pressey (2013) by explaining why clients face difficulties in evaluating the quality of legal services.

The findings of the current study contributes to the literature by suggesting the adoption of a Customer Value Proposition (CVP) approach; to move from a transitional to mutually determined position; where value is co-created and distributed across customer relationships, and social responsibility, which addresses the call for further research suggested by e.g. Brebels, et al (2011) Radnor et al. (2014); Hodges & Howieson (2017); and Lawrence et al. (2016) and consumer confidence in order to drive the positive benefits of service improvement strategies (Voorhees et al, 2021) of legal services from the client's perspective, but to also respond to needed profit and efficiency margins as a result of competition from service robots (Jörling, et al, 2020) to more specific legal-technologies (Hongdao et al, 2019; McIntyre et al, 2020).

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## TABLES

**Table 1: Enabling Perspectives from a Firms and Market Perspective**

Key themes of Legal Operations	Market Perspective (Transitional recognition of customer experience)	Firm Perspective (Supplier determined value in exchange)
<b>Improving Client engagement</b> Balthu, and Clegg (2021), Michalakopoulou, et al. (2021)	Client relationship, Client confidentiality and data protection Balthu, and Clegg (2021), Singh et al. (2017),	Amplified Innovation, Customisation Bruce et al (1996) Bourke et al, (2020) Hengstler et al (2016), Spring et al, (2022)
<b>Improving scoping and pricing legal transactions</b> Sheppard, B. (2015) (Singh et al. 2017), (Nelson and Irwin 2014)	Data driven scoping and pricing (fee predictability), Variance management, Cyber Security (Armour & Sako (2020), Valetti and Wu, (2020) Spring et al, 2022)	Document Management, Precedent management, Knowledge management. (Pemer, 2020), Goto, 2022)
<b>Improving time recording and file management process</b> (Armour & Sako (2020) (Pemer, 2020), Goto, (2022	Transparency, Flexible charge out rates,  Rules Driven- Computation Law- Analytics Esteban & Klotz, (2017), Valetti and Wu, (2020) (Armour & Sako (2020), Spring et al, 2022)	Transparency, Flexible charge out rates, Complex cross-departmental matters Complex cross departmental matters Esteban & Klotz, (2017) (Armour & Sako (2020)
<b>Improving billing process and post completion</b> Huang and Rust (2018), Pemer, 2020)	Data Driven Practice Management & legal billing Document Management Valetti and Wu, (2020)	Synchronous billing cycles, Disbursements management Valetti and Wu, (2020)

**Table 2 - Summary statistics for the 29 categories of legal cases**

Category	Number of Cases	Mean Problems	Number of No Contact	Understood Problem	Legal Aware of legal service provider	Net Satisfied (Self Did Nothing)	Satisfied (Net Got Advice)	(Net
Bought/sold a house	1898	3.79	0.14	0.55	0.54	0.83	0.55	0.82
Re mortgaged current property/transfer of equity	763	4.54	0.17	0.56	0.43	0.93	0.5	0.81
Problems with a landlord	1036	5.17	0.23	0.37	0.29	0.6	0.27	0.58
Dealt with a planning application	713	5.2	0.1	0.55	0.36	0.65	0.63	0.66
Had problems with a tenant	624	5.75	0.13	0.59	0.48	0.77	0.58	0.6
Had problems with squatters	145	8.89	0.03	0.67	0.49	0.72	0.7	0.55
Had my home reposessed/faced eviction from a rented property	315	6.21	0.15	0.43	0.42	0.62	0.46	0.56
Other problems with a property I own or am/was buying or selling	634	5.82	0.1	0.48	0.43	0.74	0.31	0.57
Homelessness	409	5.99	0.14	0.31	0.29	0.6	0.41	0.54
Divorce/dissolution of marriage or civil partnership	581	5.24	0.1	0.45	0.58	0.75	0.57	0.67
Dealt with the estate of a deceased relative	1556	3.84	0.11	0.57	0.65	0.92	0.57	0.81
Problems following a relationship breakdown	897	5.68	0.13	0.38	0.38	0.64	0.29	0.45
Legal problems with children	289	6.88	0.07	0.42	0.34	0.71	0.53	0.58
Domestic violence	508	5.97	0.19	0.31	0.27	0.59	0.31	0.45
Disputes with neighbours	1458	4.57	0.19	0.33	0.3	0.75	0.37	0.46
Discrimination	650	6.39	0.18	0.39	0.31	0.62	-0.16	0.33
Been arrested	289	5.98	0.11	0.62	0.62	0.55	0.44	0.58
Immigration problem	201	6.38	0.15	0.5	0.48	0.66	0.57	0.6
Had problems getting the right welfare/tax benefits, pensions or student loans	1416	5	0.14	0.27	0.22	0.58	0.24	0.63

Had a consumer problem	2960	3.85	0.2	0.51	0.3	0.85	0.28	0.63
Made a will	1766	3.66	0.12	0.66	0.67	0.93	0.67	0.93
Got into debt/money problems	1187	4.76	0.2	0.24	0.24	0.7	0.21	0.74
Problem with employer	1107	5.07	0.2	0.36	0.4	0.43	-0.09	0.38
Been injured at work	490	5.87	0.16	0.44	0.47	0.68	0.4	0.66
Involved in a road traffic accident	1051	4.38	0.19	0.56	0.55	0.76	0.52	0.69
Other personal injury that was not your fault	507	5.14	0.19	0.31	0.4	0.65	0.16	0.3
Legal problems with mental health issues	264	7.05	0.14	0.28	0.26	0.66	-0.05	0.4
Been treated badly by the police (police misconduct)	323	7.07	0.09	0.36	0.35	0.28	-0.04	0.2
Clinical negligence	415	5.37	0.12	0.21	0.35	0.22	-0.23	0.22

**Table 3 - Results of regression estimation**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Parameter Estimate</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Constant</b>	-2.13	0.70	0.0062
<b>NP</b>	0.13	0.038	0.0019
<b>NoContact</b>	2.00	0.75	0.014
<b>ULP</b>	-0.065	0.27	0.815
<b>Aware</b>	-0.092	0.246	0.711
<b>NSself</b>	0.43	0.150	0.0089
<b>WAge</b>	0.0230	0.009	0.0186
<b>R<sup>2</sup>=0.4583</b>		<b>Se=0.0889</b>	

**Table 4 - Satisfaction with Legal services**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Parameter Estimate</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Constant</b>	2.648	0.871	0.00581
<b>NP</b>	-0.172	0.0456	0.00101
<b>NoContact</b>	-2.034	0.944	0.0420
<b>ULP</b>	0.625	0.292	0.0430
<b>Aware</b>	-0.115	0.302	0.707
<b>WAge</b>	-0.0248	0.0114	0.0398
<b>R<sup>2</sup>=0.6726</b>		<b>Se=0.1121</b>	

FIGURES

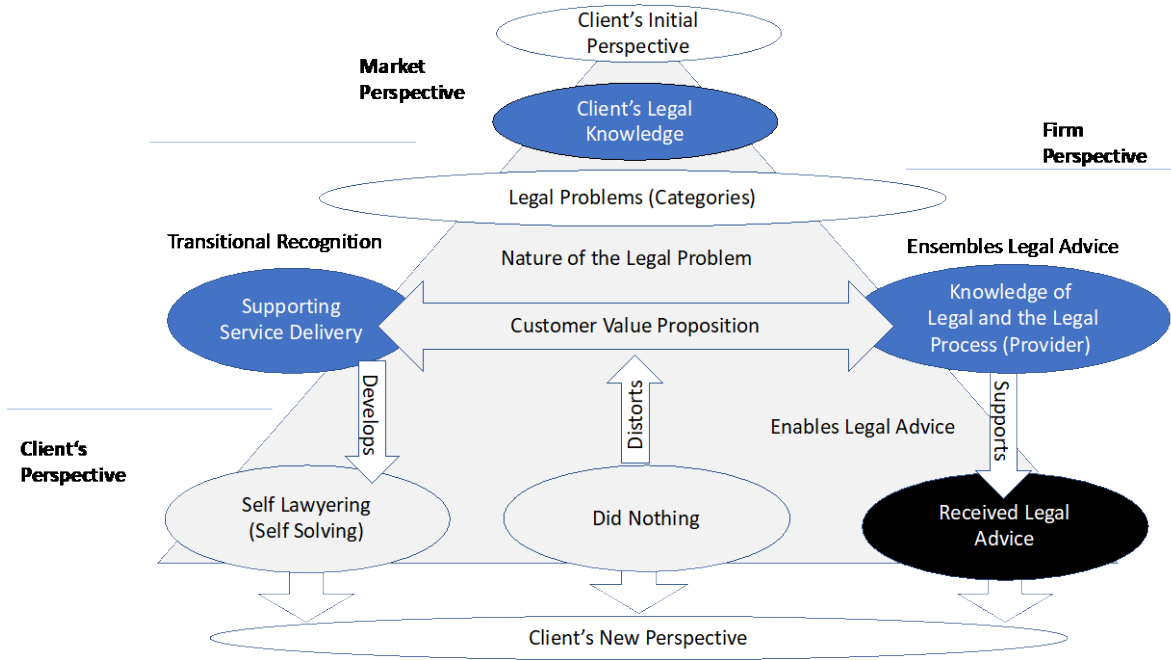


Figure 1 – Conceptualising Legal Services Customer Values Proposition (Adapted Payne et al. (2017); Rintamaki and Saarijarvi, 2021)

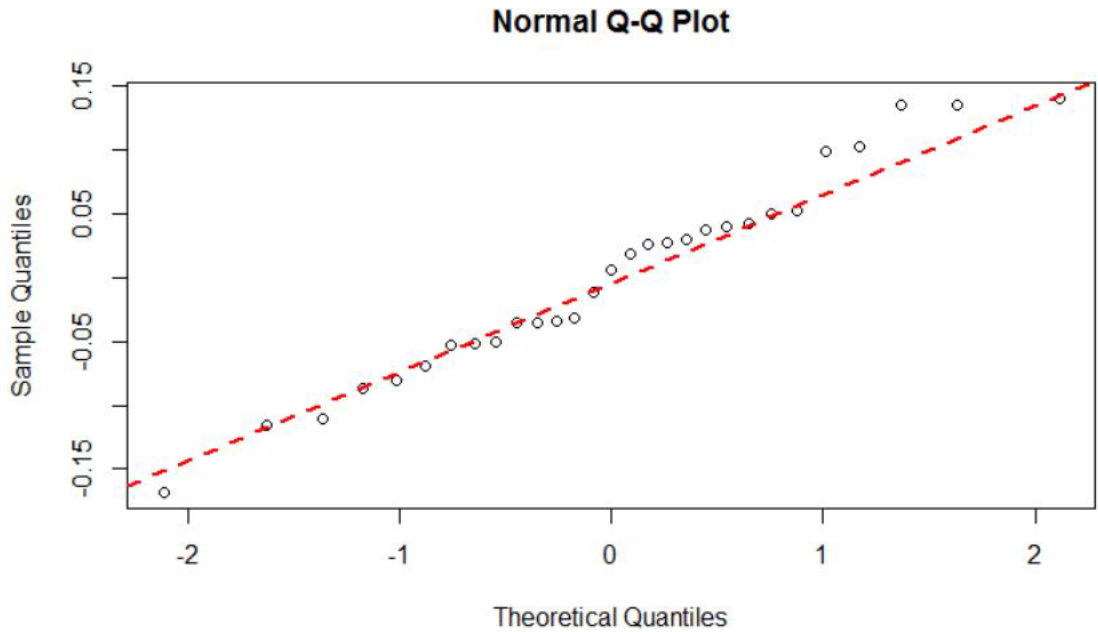


Figure 2 - QQ plot of residuals (1)



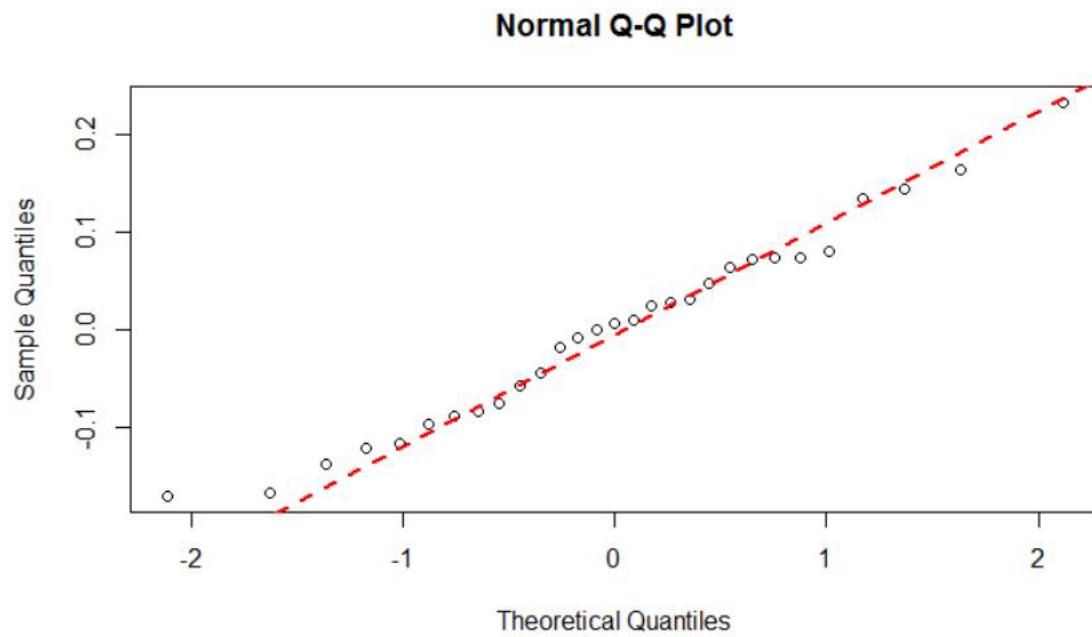


Figure 3 - QQ plot of residuals (2)

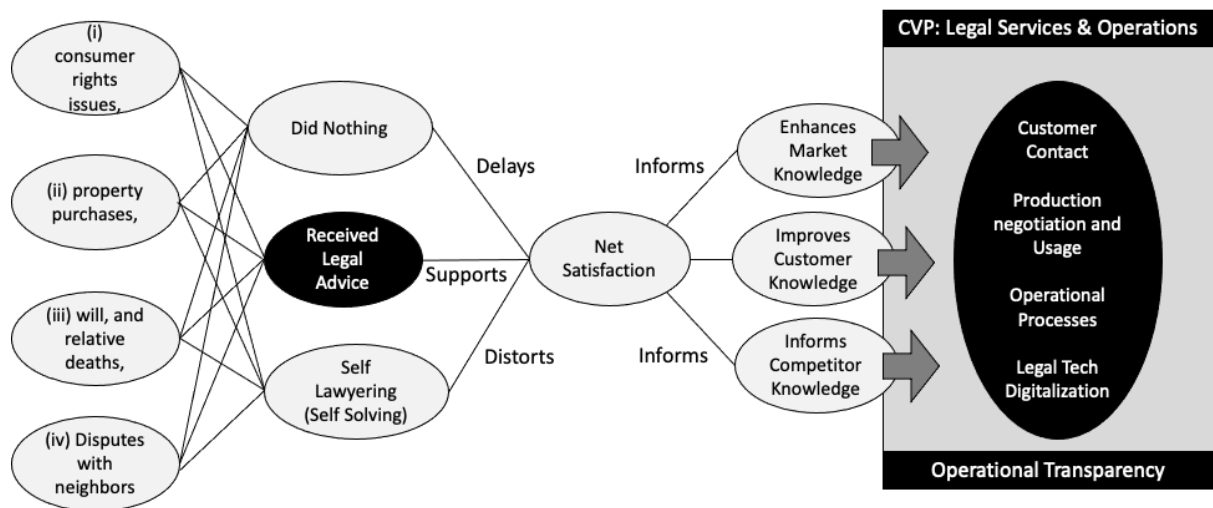


Figure 4 – CVP for Legal Services