The Moderating Role Of Safety Perception On Perceived Justice And Service Recovery Satisfaction Relation

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Abstract

Several studies have reported significant link between perceived justice dimensions, and satisfaction service recovery with different impact of the dimensions (procedural, interactional, distributional) on satisfaction service recovery, and some prove similar relationship between the dimensions using different antecedents and variables for example Brand equity, Corporate social responsibility and Switching cost. The present study aims to propose the moderating role of safety perception in the relation between perceived justice and service recovery satisfaction. Data on perceived justice with service recovery satisfaction and safety perception is to be collected through survey from domestic airline passengers in Nigeria. Similarly, safety perception is suggested to play a moderating role between perceived justice (procedural, interactional, distributive) and service recovery satisfaction. The highlights to be provided can assist in addressing the service failure problem confronting domestic airline industry in Nigeria.

Keywords: Service failure, Service recovery satisfaction, Perceived justice, Safety perception, Airline industry.

Introduction

Service Firms strive to deliver excellent and error free services, in an effort to satisfy and develop customer long-term relation, but despite all efforts mistakes occur during service delivery process. Due to nature of service, it is almost impossible to provide 100% error-free service, failures do occur even for the most customer-oriented service firms (Sparks and Fredline, 2007; del Rio-Lanza, 2009). Service failures causes dissatisfaction to customer, as a result unwanted attitude of either exit, spread of negative word of mouth or both will be shown by the customer (Kim et al., 2009). Currently service failures are among the leading reasons for customer undesirable behavior like switching behavior or negative word of mouth or both (Keaveney, 1995). In order, to overcome the negative effect of failures, firms need to take effective recovery measures to turn aggrieved customers to pleased ones as found by several studies (Blodgett et al., 1997; Smith & Bolton, 2002; Nguyen, McColl-Kennedy, and Dagger, 2012; Gursoy et al., 2007; Kuo et al., 2013). Typically, when service failure occurs, it leads to customer dissatisfaction and loss of confidence, negative emotion, and customer switching behavior (Andreassen, 2001; Bougie Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003)

Adams (1965) suggested that people feel they are fairly treated in a social exchange relationship when they perceive a balance between their efforts and the results. Similarly, Tax et al. (1998) proposed three-dimensional concept of justice namely distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. For any service failure encounters, responsible organizations need to develop ethical recovery tactics, in order to avoid inequity perception of customers. For customers to be satisfied with the service recovery, they must perceive the outcomes as just or fair (Kau and Loh 2006). A satisfactory outcome can also enhance satisfaction feeling (Goodwin and Ross 1992). Alexander (2002) findings resonated that the ethicalness of recovery attempt has impact on satisfaction. Though, various dimension roles were not investigated.

Earlier studies stressed on cognitive antecedents of evaluations by customer for instance perceived justice, until recently emotions were found to play active role in satisfaction judgement. Emotional influence on satisfaction evaluation were examine in service failure and recovery context (Menon and Dube, 2004; Zeelenberg and Pizters, 2004). Importantly, when failures occur people tend to engage in causal attribution (Weiner, 2000), this attribution essentially has an influence on customer behavior regarding the failure (Mattila and Patterson, 2004). Scholars considerable attention focused on emotion as playing a key role in the evaluation of service recovery encounters (Schoefer and Ennew, 2005; Rio-Lanza et al., 2009) Essentially, the consumption emotion experienced by customer can have a significant influence on their assessment of the service process and post-consumption behaviors. (Smith & Bolton, 2002; Bougie et al., 2003; Menon and Dube, 2004; Schoefer and Ennew, 2005; Jani and Han, 2011). This is because satisfaction is an emotional response to the experience to an encounter, and the emotion consequently serves as a basis for the behavioral intention to repatronage.

In Nigeria domestic airline industry employ efforts in providing effective and safe services to its passengers. Service failures resulting from attitudes of both cabin and ground staffs kept reoccurring, which include cancellation of flights, diversions, reservation problem or overbooking, delays and on the extreme air mishaps. The mishaps are resulting from either pilot errors, bad condition of weather, faulty maintenance procedure, run away and air traffic control failures which tend to have a negative impact on satisfaction and subsequent future behavioral intentions of passengers (Udeme, 2013). Consequently, that result to reduction in the profit of the industry because of the decline in the number of passengers (Oyetunji, 2014). Hence, to remain in the market, and reduce the negative impact on satisfaction of passengers, the airline industry need to embark on effective service recovery for enhanced satisfaction of passenger (Chang and Hung 2013)

Perceived Justice
Perceived justice in service recovery is recognized as a cognitive antecedent that can explain customer satisfaction. Customer-perceived justice in the service-recovery strategies adopted by the organization can support negative reactions to the service or improve overall satisfaction, repatronage intentions, and positive word of mouth (Blodgett, Hill, & Tax, 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2003). Although service failure has the potential to destroy customers' loyalty, the successful implementation of service recovery strategies may prevent the defection of customers who experience service failure. When a service breakdown occurs, the effective reactions of the service providers can help create even stronger bonds, whereas, poor responses may prompt customers to switch. Thus, an effective effort for service recovery after experiencing faulty service must be carefully planned and carried out in order to establish a long-term relationship with the customers (Kim et al., 2009), because inappropriate responses significantly increase the companies' defection rate. Perceived justice dimensions also have a great effect on repurchase intention. Blodgett et al. (1997) examined the effects of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice on customers' repatronage intention and negative word of mouth intention. In their study, they checked different levels (low-medium-high) of recovery scenarios based on the three justice dimensions to test how each recovery effort, with varying degrees of recovery, influences customer repatronage intention and word of mouth. The study suggested that the effects of perceived justice of customer repatronage intention and word of mouth vary across the different dimensions of justice and change with the degree of service recovery efforts as well.

In addition, Ha & Jang (2009) found that all dimensions of justice affect repatronage intention in the restaurant setting. They found that service recovery efforts, such as discounts for food items, promptness of recovery, and a sincere apology for the service failure could leave customers satisfied, consequently encouraging them to revisit the restaurant. It has also been established by many authors that the three forms of justice have a positive effect on overall service recovery

satisfaction (dos Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Karatepe, 2006; Clemmer & Schneider, 1996; Kau & Loh, 2006).

In service failure situations, customers perceive an injustice, an imbalance, in exchange (they receive a service with less than the expected value); therefore, they expect the organization to offer a service recovery to compensate the imbalance (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005). Customers form judgements about the level of justice of the recovery process, and these judgements have an impact on satisfaction (Schoefer & Ennew, 2005). Extant research indicated that the perceived justice of the recovery efforts could affect satisfaction with the recovery (Blodgett et al., 1997; Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005; Mattila & Patterson, 2004; Karatepe, 2006). In line with this the present study hypothesized that:

H_1 a) Interactional justice, b) Procedural justice, and c) Distributive justice in service recovery have positive influence on service recovery satisfaction

Perception of Safety

Perception of safety seen as one of the drivers that enhance satisfaction in air travel, airline passengers regard safety as the most imperative criteria used when choosing an airline, it is instituted that risk generally lowers satisfaction of customers. Air travel implies risk taking, that includes financial, social and psychological risk, unlike other services, air travel exposes passengers to physical risk and passengers are aware of the fact. Despite claims that safety is priority number one, accident's occurrence cannot be eliminated completely. Passengers perceived air travel to be riskier than justified from an objective view', which generates feelings of uncertainty, discomfort and anxiety. Airlines' attempt to limit risks associated with air travel by using various safety measures, but passengers hardly assess the factual safety level adopted by airline rather they resort to proxy measures of safety, which includes airline's service quality, airline appearance or security checks at the airport. Safety perception overshadowed the involved hazard in air travel; enhances satisfaction, and accordingly, in circumstance of service recovery satisfaction, it will be the same. Perception of safety is more of judgment by passengers' than precise measure, and cannot therefore in itself be reliably measured. Even though accidents cannot be completely stopped, rather they can be reduced by carefully understanding the factors causing it and be able to take precautions prior to the occurrence of the incidents. These may be from the

aircraft internal setting or the external settings of the environment in which the aircraft operates. and safety perception of the recovery process influences satisfaction of customer. Therefore, this study posits perception of safety and satisfaction of customer: Airlines should provide a measure of safety that does not depend on accidents, since operational safety cannot be effectively and reliably measured. Hock, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2010) suggests on determination of perceived safety on satisfaction. Vick, (2002) has identified safety as a construct and concept and as such is not quantifiable. Limitation of risk associated with air travel by the improvement of safety measures, which includes use of up to date aircraft, proper training of manpower and security checks at the airport used to assess safety measures by customer will affect emotion positively and increase satisfaction subsequently (Kim *et al.*, 2012). Satisfaction is very much important to business organizations, in terms of its effects on customer retention. Business organizations continually seek to increase customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is hypothesized

H_2 Perception of safety moderates the relationships between perceived justice and service recovery satisfaction
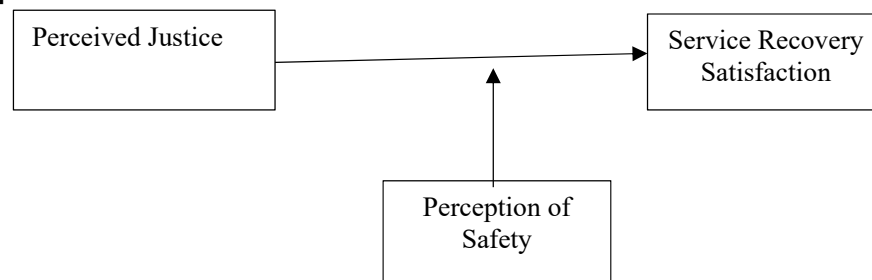
Service Recovery

All actions of service recovery are primarily enacted to restore customer confidence resulting from service failure experience (McCollough, Berry, and Yadav 2000; Wen and Chi 2013).

Findings have been extended to air travel services also (Al-Refaie et al. 2014; Bamford and Xystouri 2005). Service failures are not only inevitable, they occur commonly in air travel (Kuo et al. 2013a; Park and Park 2016). Service error frequency in air travel is due to the intangible nature of the service, and "human dealings" during the service experience (Siu, Zhang, and Yau 2013). The failures in airline service include overbooking, lost luggage, delayed or canceled flights and on the extreme air mishap (Chang and Chang 2010; Nikbin and Hyun 2015) Airlines are aware that their success lies on their ability to recover from failure through effective service recovery that enhance satisfaction of passengers (Hocutt et al., 2006; Spreng et al., 1995; Varela et al., 2008). Even though focus on service recovery has been given prominence for decades by previous researches (Graham and Sparks 2009), only a few focused-on airline industries (Park and Park, 2016; Bamford and Xystouri, 2005) and of the few, still fewer were found to examine service recovery strategies with justice theory (Ding, Ho, and Lii 2015). Effective service recovery was found to be critical towards influencing satisfaction of airline passenger due to frequency of interaction between them and service employees (Swanson and Hsu 2011; Ghalandari, Babaenia, and Jogh 2012).

Service recovery entails all actions or activities a service firm undertake in order to respond to service failure (Gronroos, 1988). All strategies employed by firm and firm employees in an effort to return the dissatisfied customer to satisfaction state are regarded as service recovery (Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Ha & Jang, 2009). For understanding effective service recovery, several researchers have utilized justice theory as the main framework for examining service recovery procedures (Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). The framework explains how customers evaluate service providers reaction to recovery. The theory present perceived justice as a concept consisting three dimensions namely: distributive, procedural and interactional justice that cognitively predict future behavioral intention of customer, but due to the complexity of the emotions of consumer, the inclusion of emotion concept in the framework makes it to adequately take care of the customers' emotion effect brought about by the service failure.

In the existing literature, numerous studies specifically addressed the relationship between customer consumption emotions and customer satisfaction in normal service settings, these studies showed that customers' positive emotions have significant positive influence on customer satisfaction while customers' negative emotions have significant negative influence on customer satisfaction (Kim et al., 2012). Previous studies largely have found that positive intentions increase with satisfaction (Bolton 1998; Oliver and Linda 1980; van Doorn and Verhoef 2008). If organization manifests appropriate safety perception to customers, they would exhibit satisfaction toward recovery. This, in turn, enhances satisfaction and their future repurchase intention.

Conceptual Model

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