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Recovering from Services Failures: The Moderating Role of Emotional Attachment

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Abstract:

This study aims to improve information about service recovery by investigating the moderating function of emotional attachment on the relationships between perceived justice components, satisfaction with service recovery, overall satisfaction, trust and loyalty. Since emotional attachment appear to have a significant influence on the way in which customers' process service information through purchase decision making, awareness of the role of emotional attachment can help service companies better comprehend how customers respond to service failures and to their efforts towards service recovery. Based on a questionnaire of 472 customers who experienced service recoveries, the results mostly support the hypothesized effects, making essential contributions to and having important implications for marketing literature and practitioners. The difference that is observed between low and high emotionally attached customers in the hypothesized relationships presents the requirement of taking emotional attachment into consideration within the context of service recovery strategies.

Keywords: Service recovery, emotional attachment, perceived justice, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty

1. Introduction

Prior research suggests that a successful recovery strategy subsequent to service failure can have an essential role in retaining customer loyalty (McCollough et al. 2000). When a service failure arises, the efficient responds of the service providers may assist generate even stronger relationships and lead to customer loyalty. Therefore, a potent effort for service recovery subsequent to encounter defective service should be cautiously designed and performed to restore and/or retain long-lasting bonds with the customers (Del Rio-Lanza et al. 2009). Understanding the service recovery process is therefore critically important.

Generally, previous studies in the field of service recovery has exclusively focused on the factors influencing customer satisfaction after a recovery and how this satisfaction influences the attitudes and behavioral intentions of the customer, with regard to overall satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (Del Rio-Lanza et al. 2009; Kau and Loh 2006; Wen and Chi 2013). In most of these studies, perceived justice has been recognized as a vital concept in clarifying the structure of customer reaction to a service breakdown and the influences of the three justice elements - distributive, interactional and procedural- have been widely investigated. Although the relationships between these variables are well formed, essential gaps still exist in this body of literature and one such highly important but relatively under-emphasized issue concerns the moderating function of emotions in a service recovery context.

In the last decade, realizing that customers' actual behavior is mostly emotion driven, some scholars working in the field of service recovery has shifted their attention to the consequence of emotions on the outcomes of service recovery strategies. In many of those studies, emotions have been found to have a significant place especially on customer attitudes and behavior (Del Rio-Lanza et al. 2009; Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2012; Wen and Chi 2013). Although the aforementioned studies already recognize the function of emotions as an important mediator in the service recovery model, to our knowledge, there still exist a limited number of studies addressing the potential moderating role that emotions can play within this context and there is still a controversy regarding the nature of this effect. As pointed out by Gregoire and Fisher (2006), there are two rival views and while some studies defend "the love is blind" effect, the others support the "love becomes hate" effect. The studies based on "love becomes hate" effect argue that since customers with high relationship quality with the service provider feel let down in cases of service failure, they generally show unfavorable responses (Gregoire and Fisher 2008; Holloway et al. 2009). Nevertheless, the research based on "love is blind" effect claim that high relationship quality and positive emotions rather favorably influence the effect of recovery attempts, protecting the service provider against negative responses (Evanschitzky et al. 2011; Gregoire et al. 2009; Kim et al. 2012). Recognizing this ongoing rivalry, Joireman et al. (2013) call for future research that concentrates on these two effects to explain how emotions affect service recovery process evaluations and consequences.

The current research points this research call by creating a theoretical model that investigates the role of emotional attachment concerning perceived justice regarding service recovery attempts and customers' both attitudinal and behavioral responses. More specifically, this study aims to enlarge the extent of current explanations of consumer reacts to service recovery by exploring the moderating function of emotional attachment on the associations between perceived justice dimensions, satisfaction with service recovery, overall satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. Defined as "the emotional bond linking an individual to a specific target" (Jimenez and Voss 2014, p. 360), emotional attachment is considered to be an essential concept in the marketing literature and is believed to provide a reason for many of the donation effects in the literature as a moderator (Shu and Peck 2011). Since emotional attachment appears to play a vital impact on the way in which customers' process service information through purchase decision making, awareness of the role of emotional attachment can help service companies better comprehend how customers respond to service failures and to their efforts towards service recovery.

The remainder of this research is designed as follows. Firstly, the conceptual framework is described and the proposed hypotheses are presented. Next, the methodology of the research is clarified in terms of the data gathering and operationalization of constructs. Then, the model is tested and the outcomes are introduced. Lastly, the research concludes with conclusions, managerial implications, limitations and directions for future studies.

2. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

This part comprises the conceptual framework of the proposed model and predictions concerning the direction of the associations between constructs. The model in Figure 1 reveals the constructs and relationships under examination.

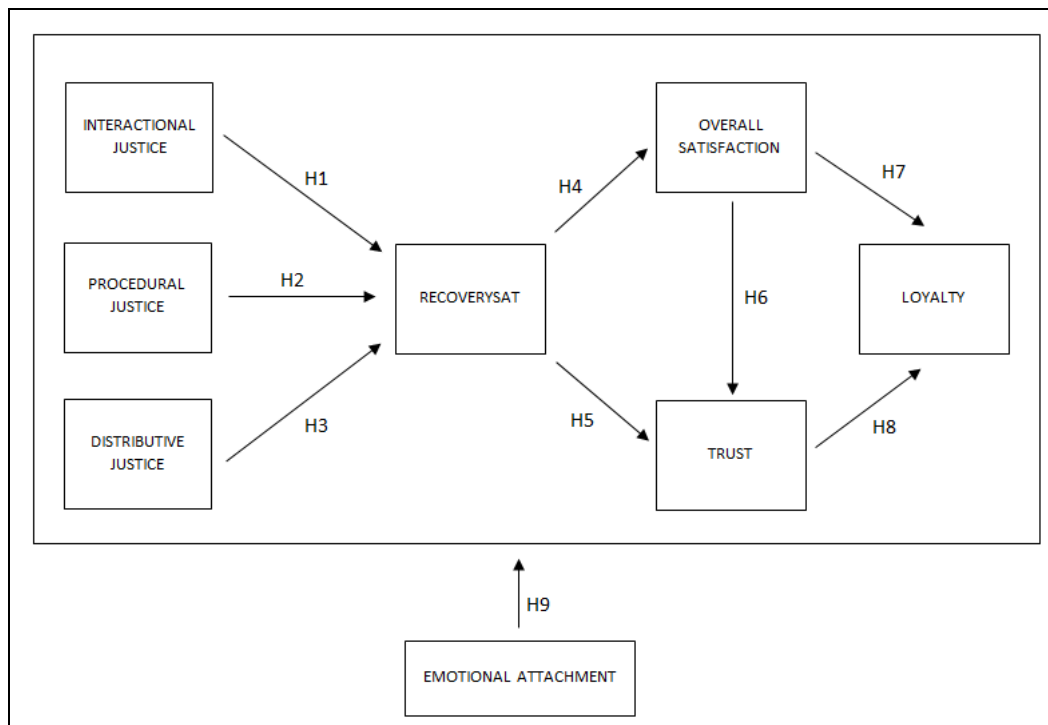


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

2.1. Perceived Justice and Recovery Satisfaction

Justice theory asserts that customers' degrees of satisfaction and their prospect loyalty dependent on whether customers feel that the recovery strategy offered is fair (McColl-Kennedy and Sparks 2003). Given that customers evaluate a recovery effort on the basis of justice perceptions, the research of justice theory in the service recovery literature is properly ascertained (Clark et al. 2009; Matos et al. 2012; Smith and Bolton 2002; Xu et al. 2014). Perceived justice refers the level of fairness customers perceive to have received during the recovery process and thus, the outcomes linked to the recovery strategy, the recovery mechanism itself, and the interpersonal behaviors performed during the recovery process and the delivery of outcomes are all vital in recovery assessment (Lii et al. 2012). Correspondingly, perceived justice contains three levels: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice, as proposed by Tax et al. (1998). Previous research suggests that customers' satisfaction and behavioral intentions subsequent to a service breakdown vary based on the extent of recovery efforts related to the distributive, procedural and interactional components of justice (Boshoff 1999; Lii et al. 2012; Mostafa et al. 2015; Siu et al. 2013). Thus, for successful recovery strategies, it is essential that service companies realize the impacts of these justice dimensions on service recovery evaluations separately.

Interactional justice centers on the interactional treatment during the process and captures the manner in which customers are served in terms of respect, politeness and dignity. Research in marketing, organizational behavior and social psychology presents insight into six potentially significant interactional elements. Fair interpersonal treatment reflects aspects of politeness, empathy, and honesty in the

complaint process, as well as the provision of an explanation, meaningful attempt and good attitude in determining a conflict (Tax et al. 1998). Prior research shows that just interpersonal conduct encourages customer satisfaction with complaint handling and recovery efforts (Lii et al. 2012; Tsai et al. 2014; Wen and Chi 2013). The cited studies reinforce the influence of interactional justice on service recovery assessments. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

- H1: Interactional justice is positively related to satisfaction with service recovery.

Procedural justice is the fairness in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources. This type of justice commonly consists of formal rules and processes related to service recovery. Seven components of procedural justice are described by Tax et al. (1998) as; assuming responsibility, knowledge of process, process control, convenience, timing/speed, follow-up and flexibility. Substantial evidence exists to point out that perceived procedural justice significantly effects customers' satisfaction with service recovery (Clark et al. 2009; Del Rio-Lanza et al. 2009; Kau and Loh 2006; Lii et al. 2012; Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2010; Wen and Chi 2013). The results of these studies lead to the next hypothesis:

- H2: Procedural justice is positively related to satisfaction with service recovery.

Distributive justice is to the perceived fairness of the actual outcomes or consequences of a decision, for instance the amount of refund or exchange presented. The idea of distributive justice has its roots in social exchange theory that highlights the function of equity in forming following exchanges (Hoffman and Kelley 2000). According to the equity principle, individuals evaluate the satisfactoriness of an exchange in terms of its fairness defined by the amount of resources (inputs) given up and the appropriateness of the gain received (reward or outcome) (McCull-Kennedy and Sparks 2003). From a distributive justice perspective, inequity occurs when a person considers the outcome is inadequate given the inputs. In the marketing literature, distributive justice has been positively linked to recovery satisfaction (Tsai et al. 2014; Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2010; Wen and Chi 2013). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

- H3: Distributive justice is positively related to satisfaction with service recovery.

2.2. Recovery Satisfaction, Overall Satisfaction, and Customer Trust

Post-recovery satisfaction is a significant concept for service providers to think. If customers are dissatisfied with the recovery attempt subsequent to a service failure, they are prone to show negative attitudinal and behavioral responses. The service recovery literature identifies two sorts of post-recovery satisfaction which are recovery satisfaction and overall satisfaction. A number of researchers treat satisfaction as a cumulative, overall assessment (Shankar et al. 2003), whereas others treat it as specific to the recovery effort (Boshoff 1999; Clark et al. 2009; McCollough et al. 2000). Since customers picture these two sorts of satisfaction in a different way (Bitner and Hubbert 1994), this study also differentiates these two constructs in the proposed model and investigates them separately.

Recovery satisfaction refers to "the degree to that a customer is satisfied with a service firm's transaction-specific service recovery effort subsequent to a service failure" (Boshoff 1999, p. 237), while overall customer satisfaction represents a cumulative satisfaction with all experiences and meets with that particular service provider (Maxham III and Netemeyer 2002). Treated as two different but related means that turn perceived justice into behavioral intention, the association between recovery satisfaction and overall satisfaction is well ascertained in the literature, given that customers usually use their recovery satisfaction to inform their overall judgment about the service provider (Maxham III and Netemeyer 2002; Siu et al. 2013; Van Vaerenbergh et al. 2014; Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2010). Based on these arguments, it is hypothesized that:

- H4: Satisfaction with service recovery is positively related to overall customer satisfaction.

Customer trust has been an essential concept in marketing literature as its importance was stressed by Dwyer et al. (1987). Previous studies suggest that customer trust evolves through past experiences and it is actually formed based on the satisfaction with consumption experiences (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman 2001). In a service recovery context, customers' assessments of service recovery efforts are vital for building customer trust towards the firm. As Tax, et al. (1998) argue customers who chose to complain are providing companies a chance to show their credibility and the resolution process forces customers' following attitudes and behaviors. In the same line, Ganesan (1994) states that trust is directly associated to meeting expectations, satisfaction over time supports the perceived trustworthiness of the company and lead to trust. Likewise, Ruyter and Wetzels (2000) argue an efficient service recovery can overcome the feeling of dissatisfaction emerging from a service failure and hence, reinforce the trust of customer towards the firm. The results of many other studies in the literature also support the idea that customers' overall satisfaction and recovery satisfaction are very important in building customer trust (Clark et al. 2009; Dos Santos and Basso 2012; Hess Jr. and Ring 2015; La and Choi, 2012; Lii et al. 2012; Van der Aa et al. 2015; Wen and Chi 2013). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

- H5: Satisfaction with service recovery is positively related to customers' trust in the service provider.
- H6: Overall customer satisfaction is positively related to customers' trust in the service provider.

2.3. Customer Loyalty, Overall Satisfaction and Customer Trust

In the services context, the concept of customer loyalty has been cleared in several different ways. Some measures of loyalty are based on behavior and they mostly focus on repeat purchasing. However, these behavioral measures have been criticized for a short of conceptual foundation and having a constricted, outcome driven sight since a low degree of repeat purchasing of a specific service may be the consequence of situational aspects like unavailability, variety seeking, barriers to change or lack of alternatives (De Los Salmones et al. 2005). In this respect, a second stream of loyalty measure has arisen that considers loyalty as an attitudinal construct which is revealed, for example, in the willingness to recommend a service provider to other customers (Selnes 1993). Consequently, in many studies, service loyalty has been operationalized in terms of both behavioral and attitudinal aspects. In the literature, there is ample evidence confirming that overall satisfaction does contribute to these behavioral and attitudinal aspects of loyalty (Lopes and

Da Silva 2015; Siu et al. 2013; van der Aa et al. 2015; Zeithaml et al. 1996). Consistent with the prior literature, this research also treats loyalty as an outcome of overall satisfaction and thus, hypothesizes that:

- H7: Overall customer satisfaction is related positively to customer loyalty.

Prior studies in the relationship marketing literature clearly provides emerging body of evidence showing that customer trust is an essential premise for customer loyalty (Garbarino and Johnson 1999; Morgan and Hunt 1994). Based on those studies, the impact of customer trust on customer loyalty is well established in the perspective of service recoveries as well (La and Choi 2012; Sun and Lin 2010). More precisely, as DeWitt et al. (2008) state, when service failures are recovered in a sense of that creates customer trust, the possibility and perceived risk of complaining to this service provider in the future is probable to be diminished which enables customers to feel more confident about the service provider's future recovery behaviors and thus feel more committed and loyal. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- H8: Customers' trust in the service provider is positively related to customer loyalty.

2.4. *The Role of Emotional Attachment*

Realizing that customers' actual behavior is mostly emotion driven, some scholars working in the field of service recovery has shifted their attention to the effect of emotions on the outcomes of service recovery strategies (Kozub et al. 2014; Schoefer and Diamantopoulos 2008). In many of those studies, emotions had a significant mediating role especially on customer attitudes and behavior. For example, in their retail banking study on service recovery, Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005) find that perceived justice affects customer loyalty through emotions. Similarly, examining the relative consequences of justice elements on satisfaction and emotions prompted by service recovery, Del Rio-Lanza et al. (2009) reveal that perceived justice influences customers' satisfaction with service recovery both directly and indirectly via emotions. In a more recent study, Wen and Chi (2013) examine the effect of emotions on delayed airline passengers and find that perceived justice and customers' emotions have direct and indirect effect on customers' service recovery satisfaction, customer trust, their purchase intentions and word-of-mouth recommendations. These findings are further maintained in other studies (Van Vaerenbergh et al. 2014; Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2012).

Emotions have also been studied implicitly through other emotion-based constructs such as customer affection and brand relationship quality. Examining the reasons of customer affection and trust on customer loyalty following service breakdown and recovery, La and Choi (2012) find that customer affection serves as an antecedent to customer trust and is directly associated to loyalty intention. These findings are further supported in a recent study by Choi and Choi (2014) that demonstrates the associations between customer affection and further major concepts like justice perceptions, customer loyalty and word-of-mouth intention. In the same line, Vazquez-Casielles et al. (2010) explore the impact of perceived justice on customer satisfaction and quality relationship and their findings reveal that justice perceptions effect positively service recovery satisfaction that subsequently positively affects the nature of the long-term company-customer relationship. The form and level of customer relationship with the service provider has been examined as a factor that can operate as a protective layer in cases of service failures and recovery attempts (Dos Santos and Basso 2012; Sajtos et al. 2010)

Even if the role of emotions as an important mediator is already well acknowledged in this stream of research, there are also studies arguing that customers' long-term relations with a service provider and their emotional attachment indeed act as a moderator on the established relationships. Yet, in these latter studies, there still exists a controversy regarding the nature of this moderation effect. As pointed out by Gregoire and Fisher (2006), there are two rival views and while some studies defend "the love is blind" effect, the others support the "love becomes hate" effect. The studies based on "love becomes hate" effect take a pessimistic stance and argue that since customers with high relationship quality with the service provider feel let down in cases of service failure, they generally show unfavorable responses (Gregoire and Fisher 2008). For example, investigating the outcomes of relationship strength and time on post-recovery behavior, Gregoire et al. (2009) observe that a firm's best customers generally have the longest unfavorable reactions, holding grudge against the firm in the form of revenge and avoidance. In a similar context, Holloway et al. (2009) scrutinize whether high quality associations magnify or buffer the unfavorable influence of service failures on following consumer attitudes and behaviors and find support for the magnifying effect. Examining the moderating function of affective commitment on post-failure attitudes and loyalty intentions, Mattila (2004) concludes that high affective commitment indeed magnifies the unfavorable influence of service failures on post-recovery attitudes. More recently, Lee et al. (2013) study perceived betrayal in an upscale restaurant setting and conclude that customers who have strong relationships with the restaurant and thus enjoy relational benefits expand the feeling of betrayal and show negative reactions, such as desire for revenge or avoidance, to a frustrating service encounter.

On the other hand, the studies based on "love is blind" effect take an optimistic stance and argue that high relationship quality and positive emotions towards the service provider rather favorably influence the effect of recovery attempts. Since customers with strong relationships with an exchange partner are more reluctant to terminate the valued relationship, they are more probable to be forgiving in cases of service failures (Gregoire and Fisher 2006). The "love is blind" effect is generally supported on the basis of assimilation bias (Herr et al. 1983) and interpretation bias (Ahluwalia 2000). Assimilation bias claims that during the evaluation process, people consider only the information that confirms their prior feelings and beliefs. Thus, in cases of services failures and recoveries, customers who have a well-built relationship are more probable to ignore information that is not consistent with their prior experiences (Dos Santos and Basso 2012). Moreover, as suggested by interpretation bias, even if customers consider this information, if they have a strong relationship, they are more probable to reduce the negative effects of the firm's unsatisfactory response to maintain consistency between past and current feelings (Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2010). In either case, when faced with an inadequate

service recovery, customers who have a strong connection are more likely to be tolerant and forgiving than customers who lack this type of a relationship.

In the literature, there are studies claiming that such strong interaction can offer a kind of protection effect by buffering the negative influence of confronts including service failures on following attitudes and behaviors. For example, studying customer assessments of service complaint experiences, Tax et al. (1998) show that, prior favorable incidents with the firm might moderate, at least to a limited extent, the impacts of low complaint handling on customer commitment and trust. Similarly, Evanschitzky et al. (2011) find that customers with high affective commitment center more on the general relationship with the provider and hence their commitment prevents the negative impacts of service failures on post recovery behavior. Examining the moderating function of a priori customer-relationship in service recovery situations, Kim et al. (2012) also reveal that high relational customers react more positively to recovery efforts than do low affiliated customers in both low and high recovery situations. Most recently, Yagil and Luria (2015) explore customers' forgiveness of unsatisfactory service and show that under strong relationships, customers are more likely to react with forgiveness and remain loyal.

These findings that support the buffering role of relationship quality and affective commitment in recovery situations can be explained based on the attachment theory, as also suggested Evanschitzky et al. (2011). This theory states that people want to be close to another or object they feel affectively committed to and continue their revalued relationship (Bowlby 1979). Drawing on this theory, Thomson et al. (2005) develop a scale of emotional attachment that indicates an emotion-laden bond between a customer and a brand that is specified by high levels of connection, affection, passion. As suggested by extant research, emotional attachment is a construct high in its level of abstraction and thus incorporates a large number of related relationship-based phenomena such as relationship strength or affective commitment (Jimenez and Voss 2014). Thus, this study uses "emotional attachment" construct to refer to the strength of any type of emotion-laden relationship between service providers and customers and argues that customers who are emotionally attached to a service provider tolerate even the negative effects of services failures just to maintain or increase their scope of interactions and show more favorable responses to recovery efforts. Based on these arguments, it is hypothesized that:

- H9: Emotional attachment towards the service provider will moderate the relationships among interactional justice, distributive justice, procedural justice, service recovery satisfaction, overall satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection Procedures and Sample

The survey was conducted personally by the members of a professional research company to a convenience sample of customers inhabiting in Istanbul. The participants were requested to consider a recent unfavorable experience (within the last 12 months) with a service provider and their responses subsequent to the service failure. This reflective framework is prevalent in service-research investigations (Keaveney 1995). Then, three open-ended questions were asked about this experience: (1) What was the nature of the problem you experienced? (2) What was the name of this service firm? (3) Was the service failure recovered, if yes what was the form of this recovery? Service failures and forms of recovery were reported from a variety of sectors (e.g., banking, healthcare, telecommunication, transportation). The completion of each questionnaire lasted between 10-15 minutes. 472 usable questionnaires were collected within approximately five weeks.

The demographic structure of the participants is shown in Table 1. The sample contains 54.9% female and 45.1% male participants. The ages of the respondents varied from eighteen years to sixty-nine years, with an average of thirty-three years. In regard to marital status, 52.5% of the participants were single, followed by 45.3% who were married. In terms of educational levels, 45.6% of the participants completed high school as their latest degree, while 29.7% had a bachelor's degree. With regard to occupation, the largest group was the self-employed people (26.7%), followed by blue collar workers (22.2%), students (19.7%) and white collar workers (19.1%). In terms of monthly income, more than half of the participants (51.9%) reported that their income equaled their expenses, while 22.9% reported that their income was less than their expenses.

Characteristics	Frequency	Sample %
Gender		
Male	213	45.1
Female	259	54.9
Age (in years)		
18-24	138	29.2
25-34	150	31.8
35-44	109	23.0
45-54	48	10.2
55-64	24	5.1
65 and over	3	0.6
Marital Status		
Single	248	52.5
Married	214	45.3
Divorced/widowed	10	2.1

Level of education		
Literate	1	0.2
Primary school	54	11.4
Secondary school	52	11.0
High school	215	45.6
University	140	29.7
Graduate school	10	2.1
Current working status		
Blue collar worker	105	22.2
White collar worker	90	19.1
Self-employed	126	26.7
Unemployed/job seeker	6	1.3
Housewife	35	7.4
Retired	17	3.6
Student	93	19.7
Monthly household income		
Income is more than expenses	95	20.1
Income equals expenses	245	51.9
Income is less than expenses	108	22.9
No income	20	4.2

Table 1: Demographic summary of the participants

3.2. Measures

The measures employed multi-item scales, all borrowed from prior studies and adapted to current present research. Each justice dimension was measured by the scales used by Del Rio-Lanza et al. (2009). Every one of items were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The interactional justice was measured by six items, while each of the other two justice dimensions was measured by five items. For measuring the recovery satisfaction, the five-item scale adapted from Del Rio-Lanza et al. (2009) was used. The overall satisfaction was measured by a three-item scale adapted from Valera-Neira et al. (2008). The three-item scale for customer trust was adapted from Garbarino and Johnson (1999) and the five-item scale to measure customer loyalty was adapted from Zeithaml et al. (1996). Finally, for the multiple-group analysis, emotional attachment was measured by the six items adapted from Malar et al. (2011) who revised the original emotional attachment scale provided by Thomson et al. (2005).

A process including numerous translations and back translations was pursued to make sure that the measures translated into Turkish are substitute to the English version. Prior to the pilot study, a group of expert judges was requested to evaluate the face validity of items in each group, as suggested in the scale development literature (DeVellis 2003). Then a pilot study was carried out by administering the questionnaire in a one-to-one interview setting to a convenience sample of twelve graduate students. With respect to comments and recommendations, the questionnaire was revised with regard to clarification of wordings and overall layout prior to main research.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1. Assessment of the Measures

Prior to the analyses of the overall measurement model via confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were executed to identify the factor structure of the observed variables. These preliminary results showed that each scale loaded in one single factor with Cronbach's alpha exceeding the threshold of 0.7. After EFA, the two-step approach of structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed, as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), using AMOS 18.0. The measurement model was estimated before the analysis of the structural model, and the 38 items used to measure eight constructs were subjected to CFA to confirm unidimensionality and convergent validity. After dropping the one item that loaded poorly onto interactional justice, the revised CFA model fitted acceptably to the data, with a chi-square (χ^2) of 1298.220 with 588 degrees of freedom ($p < .01$), Normed $\chi^2 = 2.208$, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .051, comparative fit index (CFI) of .975, normed fit index (NFI) of .955, and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) of .971. The χ^2 result showed that the observed covariance matrix did not match the predicted covariance matrix within the sampling variance. This was expected since the χ^2 appears to be overly sensitive to trivial discrepancies if the sample size is large (Kline 2005). Therefore, given the problems associated with using the χ^2 as a goodness-of-fit test alone and the effective sample size of 472, other overall model fit statistics were examined closely as well and these indicated a reasonable level of fit.

Construct/Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Construct Reliability ^(a)	Average Variance Extracted ^(b)
Distributive Justice		.973	.971	87%
DJ1	.937			
DJ2	.933			
DJ3	.932			
DJ4	.915			
DJ5	.947			
Procedural Justice		.936	.937	75 %
PJ1	.923			
PJ2	.885			
PJ3	.957			
PJ4	.745			
PJ5	.806			
Interactional Justice		.955	.951	80%
IJ1	.918			
IJ2	.942			
IJ3 ^(c)	-			
IJ4	.863			
IJ5	.913			
IJ6	.816			
Overall Satisfaction		.973	.974	93 %
OverS1	.951			
OverS2	.971			
OverS3	.963			
Recovery Satisfaction		.976	.975	89 %
RecSat 1	.945			
RecSat 2	.949			
RecSat 3	.883			
RecSat 4	.967			
RecSat 5	.958			
Customer Trust		.975	.975	93 %
Tru 1	.955			
Tru 2	.980			
Tru 3	.957			
Customer Loyalty		.963	.963	84 %
Loy 1	.871			
Loy 2	.933			
Loy 3	.931			
Loy 4	.940			
Loy 5	.903			
Emotional Attachment				
EmAtt1	.938	.976	.977	88%
EmAtt2	.932			
EmAtt3	.883			
EmAtt4	.961			
EmAtt5	.952			
EmAtt6	.953			
χ^2 (588) = 1298.220, p-value = 0.000 Normed χ^2 = 2.208				
RMSEA = .051, CFI = .975, NFI = .955, TLI = .971				
Notes: (a) $[(\sum(s_{i_j}))^2]/[(\sum(s_{i_j}))^2 + \sum(e_i)]$				
(b) $[(\sum(s_{i_j}^2))]/[(\sum(s_{i_j}^2) + \sum(e_i))]$				
(c) Deleted item				

Table 2: CFA outcomes of the measurement model

Subsequently, the reliability of the measures was reevaluated with CFA. As can be seen in Table 2, for all constructs, the estimates for construct reliability and average variance extracted were above the recommended threshold levels, 0.60 and 0.50 respectively, as suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), representing that measures were internally consistent. Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha estimates were all above the suggested threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally 1978). Additionally, for all the constructs factor loadings were high and significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating convergent validity, and the square root of average variance extracted for each construct was greater than the standardized correlation of that construct with others, indicating discriminant validity of the measures employed (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The inter-correlations for the constructs operationalized in the current research are shown in Table 3. The finalized measurement items are given in the Appendix.

	Distributive Justice	Procedural Justice	Interactional Justice	Recovery Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction	Customer Trust	Customer Loyalty	Emotional Attachment
Distributive Justice	.87							
Procedural Justice	.822 (.676)	.75						
Interactional Justice	.771 (.594)	.716 (.513)	.80					
Recovery Satisfaction	.841 (.707)	.807 (.651)	.848 (.719)	.89				
Overall Satisfaction	.747 (.558)	.713 (.508)	.803 (.645)	.868 (.753)	.93			
Customer Trust	.756 (.572)	.721 (.520)	.813 (.661)	.846 (.716)	.884 (.781)	.93		
Customer Loyalty	.741 (.549)	.687 (.472)	.807 (.651)	.839 (.704)	.846 (.716)	.868 (.753)	.84	
Emotional Attachment	.544 (.296)	.522 (.272)	.557 (.310)	.561 (.315)	.573 (.328)	.599 (.359)	.633 (.401)	.88

Table 3: Inter-correlations for the constructs

All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

The diagonal represents the average variance extracted (AVE) scores.

The square of the correlations is stated in parentheses.

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

Once the measurement model was confirmed, the structural model was then estimated. Path analysis was used to test the predicted relationships among exogenous and endogenous construct. The maximum likelihood estimation was utilized to predict the structural parameters of the model. Compared to values suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), the overall fit of the model provided acceptable statistics as follows: a chi-square (χ^2) of 1052.94 with 411 degrees of freedom ($p < .01$), Normed $\chi^2 = 2.562$, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .058, comparative fit index (CFI) of .972, normed fit index (NFI) of .956, and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) of .969.

The results showed that of the eight direct paths, all produced significant coefficient estimates. An outline of the results is presented in Table 4. The model explained a significant part of the variance (R^2) in four endogenous variables: 88.3% of variance in recovery satisfaction, 80.1 % in overall satisfaction, 84.1% in customer trust, and 83.5 % in customer loyalty. In respect of the associations between perceived justice dimensions and recovery satisfaction, compared to the other two dimensions, interactional justice was the one that appeared to have a greater effect on recovery satisfaction ($\gamma = .531$; $p < .01$), supporting H1. The expected effect of both procedural justice ($\gamma = .213$; $p < .01$) and distributive justice ($\gamma = .259$; $p < .01$) on recovery satisfaction was also significant, supporting H2 and H3. As hypothesized, recovery satisfaction was positively related to both overall satisfaction ($\beta = .895$; $p < .01$) and customer trust ($\beta = .356$; $p < .01$), supporting H4 and H5, respectively. Furthermore, overall satisfaction had a significant impact on customer trust ($\beta = .585$; $p < .01$), supporting H6. Finally, customer loyalty was influenced directly both by overall satisfaction ($\beta = .381$; $p < .01$), and customer trust ($\beta = .554$; $p < .01$), supporting H7 and H8, respectively.

	Structural Paths	Standardized Coefficient	t-value	
H1	Interactional Justice→ Recovery Satisfaction	.531	13.412**	Supported
H2	Procedural Justice→ Recovery Satisfaction	.213	5.064**	Supported
H3	Distributive Justice→ Recovery Satisfaction	.259	5.423**	Supported
H4	Recovery Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction	.895	31.565**	Supported
H5	Recovery Satisfaction → Customer Trust	.356	6.990**	Supported
H6	Overall Satisfaction→ Customer Trust	.585	11.352**	Supported
H7	Overall Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	.381	6.792**	Supported
H8	Customer Trust→ Customer Loyalty	.554	9.682**	Supported
Normed $\chi^2=2.562$, RMSEA= .058, CFI= .972, NFI= .956, and TLI= .969				
** Significant at $p<.01$				

Table 4: Results of the structural model

4.3. Test of Moderating Effect of Emotional Attachment

In the second phase, the moderator effect of level of emotional attachment customers feel towards a service provider was evaluated using multiple-group analysis, as suggested by Homburg and Giering (2001). To perform the multiple-group analysis, two subsamples- high emotional attachment and low emotional attachment- were created by using the emotional attachment scale by Malar et al. (2011). Based on this scale, the participants were divided into two groups based on the median value (3.78). The low emotional attachment (LEA) group and the high emotional attachment (HEA) group had 233 and 239 respondents, respectively.

In the first phase of the moderator analysis, an overall χ^2 -difference test was conducted by comparing the two models — one that imposed equality constraints on the independent variables across the subgroups and a broader model that allowed all parameters to differ freely over the subgroups. Table 5 depicts the results of the moderating effect of emotional attachment. As suggested by $\Delta \chi^2$ difference, of the eight paths, four showed statistically significant differences. Thus, H9 was partially supported.

Emotional attachment influenced the relationship between recovery satisfaction and overall satisfaction, the relationship between recovery satisfaction and trust, the relationship between overall satisfaction and trust, and the relationship between overall satisfaction and loyalty. The analyses showed that recovery satisfaction strongly influenced customer trust in the LEA group ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.175$). The influence of recovery satisfaction on overall satisfaction was relatively stronger in the HEA group ($\Delta\chi^2 = 5.789$). While overall satisfaction had a stronger influence on customer trust in the HEA group ($\Delta\chi^2 = 5.833$), its influence on customer loyalty was stronger in the LEA group ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2.761$).

Paths	Low emotional attachment		High emotional attachment		$\Delta \chi^2$ difference ($\Delta df=1$)
	Standardized coefficient	t-value	Standardized coefficient	t-value	
Interactional Justice→ Recovery Satisfaction	.514	8.763**	.614	9.861**	1.41
Procedural Justice→ Recovery Satisfaction	.226	3.770**	.210	3.312**	.279
Distributive Justice→ Recovery Satisfaction	.266	3.970**	.174	2.153*	1.54
Recovery Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction	.816	17.253**	.908	20.219**	5.789
Recovery Satisfaction → Customer Trust	.412	5.992**	.166	1.943	4.175
Overall Satisfaction→ Customer Trust	.483	6.951**	.765	8.781**	5.833
Overall Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty	.419	5.137**	.278	3.375**	2.761
Customer Trust→ Customer Loyalty	.433	5.321**	.685	7.814**	2.068

** Significant at $p<.01$, * Significant at $p<.05$

Table 5: Results of the moderating effect of emotional attachment

5 Research Suggestions and Implications

5.1. Research Findings

As flawless customer service is practically unattainable, it is essential to identify how customers respond to service recovery attempts. If marketers can better comprehend the influence of such recovery efforts on customers, afterward they will be able to formulate more potent strategies and, eventually, maintain or increase long-term customer loyalty. Accordingly, this research investigates the associations between the perceived justice dimensions, service recovery satisfaction, overall satisfaction and customer trust and how these actually contribute to creating loyal customers even after service failures, along with the moderating effect of emotional attachment on these relationships. The results mostly support the hypothesized effects, making essential contributions to and having essential recommendations for marketing literature and practitioners.

In line with prior research, this study supports the significant and positive role that the three justice dimensions play on recovery satisfaction (Matos et al. 2012). Yet, an interesting result is that the influence of interactional justice on service recovery satisfaction is much stronger compared to the other two justice dimensions. Despite the fact that there exist many studies that argue to the contrary showing that procedural justice and distributive justice indeed have an equally strong influence on recovery satisfaction, the findings of this study can be explained on cultural grounds. Prior research has shown that Hofstede's cultural dimensions have relevant influence in the context of the social exchanges between customers and service firms, particularly in the case of service failures and recoveries (Matos et al. 2011; Van Vaerenbergh et al. 2014). In their study, Mattila and Patterson (2004) demonstrate that perceptions of justice interrelate with the recovery procedure in a way that the collectivist customers are more attentive to interactional justice when the firm-initiated recovery exists. This outcome is later reinforced by the studies of Matos et al. (2011), Patterson et al. (2006) and Schoefer (2010), which demonstrate that the higher the collectivistic orientation of a person, the greater the influence that perceptions of interactional justice have on recovery satisfaction. Since Turkey is a country that is predominantly collectivist (Wasti 2002), this finding is not that surprising.

The findings of the research point out that service recovery satisfaction has a positive impact on overall satisfaction and customer trust towards the service provider as well. That is to say, the higher the customers' degree of recovery satisfaction is, the higher will be their overall satisfaction and trust. These results are coherent with earlier study (Vazquez-Casielles et al. 2010). Additionally, the findings reveal that while both overall satisfaction and trust directly generate customer loyalty, overall satisfaction may also indirectly contribute to customer loyalty via its positive influence on customer trust.

Even if the results of the research do not maintain the expected moderating role of emotional attachment on the relationship between the three justice dimensions and recovery satisfaction, the expected moderation effect is observed in all the other relationships, except the one between customer trust and customer loyalty. Supporting the "love is blind" view in prior research (Evanschitzky et al. 2011), satisfaction with service recovery has a significant and very strong effect on overall satisfaction but this influence is relatively stronger among customers with high emotional attachment compared to the ones with lower emotional attachment. Similarly, overall satisfaction significantly influences customer trust for all customers, but this effect is again stronger among customers with higher attachment.

An unexpected yet interesting finding regarding the moderating role of emotional attachment is that while the influence of recovery satisfaction on customer trust is not significant in the high attachment group, this relationship is significant and strong in the low attachment group. A similar effect is also observed in the overall satisfaction- customer loyalty relationship. While overall satisfaction significantly affects customer loyalty for both groups, this effect is more marked among customers with low emotional attachment. In the literature, it is already acknowledged that customers will forgive a service provider that they are committed to in cases of poor service recoveries and give the service provider another chance not to unleash their relationship (Kim et al. 2012). Therefore, in cases of high emotional attachment, recovery satisfaction is not influential on customer trust since customers in that group will be more tolerant towards the service providers and will trust their service provider anyhow. But in cases of low emotional attachment, recovery satisfaction will be very important as a strategic tool for building trust.

Similarly, overall satisfaction has stronger impacts on loyalty among customers with low emotional attachment. This can be described based on the information that customers who have high emotional attachment will be loyal to the service provider in any case. Thus, their overall satisfaction will slightly affect their loyalty. However, for customers who are not yet highly emotionally attached, overall satisfaction will be very important for creating loyalty. Of course, this does not mean that overall satisfaction is not important for customers with high emotional attachment. Even if overall satisfaction has a significant but relatively weaker influence on loyalty, its effect on trust is very strong among highly attached customers. These customers who enjoy high levels of overall satisfaction will trust the service provider even more and this will enhance their loyalty towards the provider, helping to create long-lasting mutual bonds. The difference that is observed between low and high emotionally attached customers in the hypothesized relationships depicts the requirement of taking emotional attachment into account in the service recovery strategies.

5.2. Managerial Implications

The findings of the research provide various essential implications for marketing managers. First, considering the major significance of interactional justice, service managers are supposed to implement a training agenda that teaches how to accurately treat furious customers, showing empathy and attentiveness, and presenting a sincere apology (Kim et al. 2009). Additionally, service-contact employees should be empowered to offer a rapid recovery resolution for any service failure. Of course, the importance of distributive and procedural justice dimensions should also be not overlooked since customers still care about the outcomes they receive and the procedures they are faced to during a recovery process.

Second, satisfaction with service recovery results in higher levels of overall satisfaction and trust towards the service provider. Thus, remedying a service failure with a successful recovery can help managers reinstall the overall satisfaction and customers' trust on service provider, as also reinforced by the findings of Kau and Loh (2006). These two elements also have a crucial part in service recovery process as they both contribute, either directly and/or indirectly, to customer loyalty. All these outcomes present managers with the insights concerning the ways of rebuilding loyalty after service failures occur.

Third, service managers should give priority to building long-term relationships with their customers and enhance customers' emotional attachment to them. As a customer becomes emotionally attached to a service provider, they are not only more forgiving in cases of service failures but may also be more favorable with regard to their responses to the service provider. Thus, having customers who are emotionally attached is very important from a strategic perspective.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Naturally, there are some limitations that the current research could not avoid and these limitations open up directions for future research. Firstly, the findings of this research may be influenced by participants' memory bias, due to its cross-sectional nature. Future research needs to carry on a longitudinal design to outline the association between customers' perceived justice related with service recovery over time, since most relationship variables might be measured more precisely in the time-series design. Secondly, the findings of this study should be cautiously generalized as the sample is limited to respondents from a single country. It will be appealing to see the results of studies conducted on different cultures. Thus, future studies should perform cross-cultural research to investigate the role of culture in justice theory. Third, the respondents experienced services failures from a variety of sectors and the heterogeneity of these sectors may create problems. Future studies may appraise analyzing the model with a broader sample of customers who encountered service recoveries in particular service forms to extend the reasoning in terms of the issues discussed in this research. Finally, future studies may consider the moderating effect of other emotion-based constructs such as customer affection and brand relationship quality in depth, along with some situational factors such as the severity of service failures or attribution features (i.e. locus, controllability, and stability) to enrich and confirm the current findings.

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Appendix 1

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Appendix 2 The finalized measurement items

Construct/Item	Statement
Distributive Justice	
DJ1	Considering the trouble caused and the time lost, the compensation I received from (the service provider) was acceptable.
DJ2	(The service provider) took good compensation measures to solve the problem.
DJ3	(The service provider) 's efforts were sufficient to offer a satisfactory compensation.
DJ4	I think (the service provider) was quite fair when compensating me for the problem that occurred.
DJ5	In general, (the service provider) was able to compensate me adequately to solve the problems it had in the delivery of the service.
Procedural Justice	
PJ1	I think my problem was resolved in the right way by (the service provider).
PJ2	I think the firm (the service provider) has good policies and practices for dealing with problems.
PJ3	Despite the trouble caused by the problem, (the service provider) was able to respond adequately.
PJ4	(The service provider) proved flexible in solving the problem.
PJ5	(The service provider) tried to solve the problem as quickly as possible.
Interactional Justice	
IJ1	The employees in (the service provider) showed interest in my problem.
IJ2	The employees in (the service provider) did everything possible to solve my problem.
IJ3 ^(a)	The employees in (the service provider) proved able and to have enough authority to solve the problem.
IJ4	The employees in (the service provider) were honest when dealing with my problem.
IJ5	The employees in (the service provider) showed interest in being fair when solving the problem.
IJ6	The treatment and communication with (the service provider) employees to solve the problem were acceptable.
Overall Satisfaction	
OverS1	I am satisfied with the services provided by (the service provider).
OverS2	I am satisfied with my decision of choosing (the service provider).
OverS3	Overall, I am satisfied with my relationship through time with (the service provider).
Recovery Satisfaction	
RecSat 1	I am satisfied with the way my problem was dealt with and resolved.
RecSat 2	I am happy with the way my problem was solved.
RecSat 3	I am satisfied with the treatment from the employees involved in resolving the problem.
RecSat 4	I am satisfied with the procedure (way of working) and the resources used to solve the problem.
RecSat 5	In my opinion, (the service provider) provided a satisfactory solution to this particular problem.
Customer Trust	
Tru 1	(The service provider) can be counted to be good.
Tru 2	(The service provider) is reliable.
Tru 3 ^(b)	(The service provider) cannot always be trusted.
Customer Loyalty	
Loy 1	I will say positive things about (the service provider) to other people.
Loy 2	I will recommend (the service provider) to someone who seeks your advice.
Loy 3	I will encourage friends and relatives to do business with (the service provider).
Loy 4	I will consider (the service provider) your first choice to buy services.
Loy 5	I will do more business with (the service provider) in the next few years.
Emotional Attachment	
	Your feelings toward (the service provider) can be characterized by:
EmAtt1	Affection
EmAtt2	Love
EmAtt3	Connection
EmAtt4	Passion
EmAtt5	Delight
EmAtt6	Captivation

Notes: (a) Deleted item

(b) Reverse coded item