

Service recovery's influence on consumer satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, and purchase intentions

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Abstract

This paper reports two studies (i.e., an experimental design and a field study) that examine the effects that different levels of service recovery have on satisfaction, purchase intentions, and one's propensity to spread positive word-of-mouth (WOM). The results indicate that moderate to high service recovery efforts significantly increase post-failure levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM. Alternatively, poor service recoveries seemingly exacerbate the discontent attributed to a service failure. The results do not support a recovery paradox, whereby post-recovery satisfaction is greater than that satisfaction prior to the service failure. In addition, the studies suggest that firms may not always benefit (in terms of consumer perceptions) from service recovery efforts over and above a moderate level. © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Regardless of the precautions set forth to ensure proper service delivery, even firms that typically display exceptional service are prone to some degree of service failure. Service failures may refer to some consumer-perceived breakdown in a firm's system (e.g., flight delays, under-prepared food, incorrect account balances, etc.). These failures can prove extremely costly for firms, as customers often switch providers after such experiences (Folkes, 1984; Folkes and Kotsos, 1986). Given that it costs up to five times as much to recruit new customers than it does to keep current customers happy (Hart et al., 1990), customer retention becomes critical for many firms. One method of enhancing a firm's customer retention involves properly responding to service failures (Webster and Sundaram, 1998). However, despite the cost and profitability benefits of retaining current customers, very little research has been conducted on the topic of recovering from service failures (Kelley and Davis, 1994; Smith et al., 1998). Such attempts by firms to rectify some consumer-perceived service failure

(e.g., faulty service, discourteous employees, etc.) are often termed "service recoveries."

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of differing levels of service recovery on consumer perceptions of satisfaction, purchase intentions, and positive WOM. The paper first reviews the literature that provides the hypotheses for the research. Then, two studies, one an experiment and the other a field study, are conducted to test the hypotheses. The results are subsequently presented and a discussion with implications is also presented.

2. Literature review

2.1. Service recovery

As stated earlier, service failure is apt to occur at some point in time for firms in the service industry. For the present studies, service failures are defined as any service-related mishaps or problems (real and/or perceived) that occur during a consumer's experience with a firm. Though it is unlikely that service firms can eliminate all service failures, they can learn to effectively respond to failures once they do occur. This response is often referred to as service recovery and is defined as the process by which a

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firm attempts to rectify a service delivery failure (Kelley and Davis, 1994).

Some researchers suggest that a firm's recovery effort can either reinforce customer relationships or compound the failure (Hoffman et al., 1995; Smith et al., 1998). Others suggest that over one-half of service recovery efforts actually compound the problem (Kelley et al., 1993). As such, it seems conceivable that poor service recoveries can cause consumers to rate failing firms lower after their recovery efforts than they rated the firms immediately following the failures.

In contrast to a poor recovery, many suggest that a proper recovery can restore levels of satisfaction and promote referrals for future purchases (Goodwin and Ross, 1992). Moreover, a superior service recovery effort may induce a "paradoxical" scenario, whereby consumers will rate the failing firm higher after the recovery than they rated the firm prior to the failure (Hart et al., 1990; Kelley et al., 1993). For example, Goodwin and Ross (1992) claim that satisfaction levels after complaint-handling (secondary satisfaction) can prove to be higher than previous levels of satisfaction. Their research further suggests that effective complaint-handling can lead to stronger customer loyalty. These phenomena are often referred to as the "recovery paradox" (McCullough and Berry, 1996; McCullough and Bharadwaj, 1992). Despite the potential importance of the recovery paradox, only a sparse number of empirical studies have examined it.

The research of Kelley et al. (1993) suggested that firms should make every attempt to recover from a service failure, as an effective recovery will maintain customer loyalty despite the type of failure. In their study, customer retention exceeded 70% for those customers that perceived effective recovery efforts. Another study reported that customers who experienced a service failure told nine or ten individuals about their poor service experience, whereas satisfied customers only told four or five individuals about their satisfactory experience (Collier, 1995). Therefore, an effective recovery process may lead to positive word-of-mouth (WOM), or at least diminish the negative WOM typically associated with poor recovery efforts (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997). Such advantages of effective service recovery efforts display the importance they can play in satisfying current customers. From this viewpoint, it seems reasonable to propose that the manner in which a firm recovers from service failure could become a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. Given that effective recoveries are likely to benefit firms, it seems crucial that firms understand how consumers perceive a firm in response to a product or service failure. Despite the important benefits that may result from effective service recoveries, there are few theoretical or empirical studies that examine them (Smith et al., 1998). The next section presents the equity theory framework, which provides the foundation for the study. First, equity theory is offered as the cornerstone of the service recovery process. Next, the author conceptualize satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM within a service recovery context.

2.2. Equity theory

Equity theory focuses on the motivational and cognitive processes of weighing sacrifices or investments (justice inputs) against rewards (justice outputs), and comparing the result with others experiencing similar situations (Greenberg, 1990). Equity theory's notion of "fairness" is relevant in any domain in which exchange takes place because it is conceivable that one or both parties will perceive inequity in the exchange (Adams, 1963; Huppertz et al., 1978). An equity theory framework seems especially tenable in a service failure context, given that consumers often perceive an inequity following a service failure. When inequities arise, equity theory provides a meaningful framework for shaping consumer perceptions of satisfaction, purchase intent, and WOM.

Several researchers have employed equity theory to explain consumer responses to service failures and recovery efforts (Blodgett et al., 1993; Clemmer and Schneider, 1996; Huppertz et al., 1978; Oliver and Swan, 1989; Seiders and Berry, 1998). These studies generally argue that consumer ratings of failing firms will increase when they offer fair recovery efforts. As such, the author view equity theory as a theoretical rationale for the formation of some key psychological (i.e., satisfaction) and behavioral (i.e., purchase intent and WOM) outcomes in a service recovery setting. The author discuss these constructs further in the sections below.

2.3. Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction refers to an individual's subjectively derived favorable evaluation of any outcome and/or experience associated with consuming a product (Westbrook, 1980). Conceptually, satisfaction is a purchase outcome, whereby consumers compare rewards and costs with anticipated consequences (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Churchill and Suprenant, 1982; LaTour and Peat, 1979; Oliver, 1980; Yi, 1990). Operationally, satisfaction is similar to attitude, as it represents the sum of several attribute satisfaction judgments. From this perspective, satisfaction is a transaction specific measure (Bitner, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Others view service-related satisfaction a bit differently. Cronin and Taylor (1994) suggest that satisfaction is a cumulative evaluation, and an outgrowth of service quality. In their view, satisfaction represents a global judgment rather than a transaction-specific measure. Satisfaction is also thought to have an affective element that is experiential, and, probably, is most appropriately assessed after consumption (Ostrom and Iacobucci, 1995). For the purpose of this research, satisfaction is operationalized in a manner consistent with Cronin and Taylor (1994) and Ostrom and Iacobucci (1995).

While several theories exist regarding the formation of satisfaction perceptions, the equity theory perspective seems particularly relevant in a service recovery context, given that

consumers generally perceive some degree of inequity in response to a service failure. Consistent with the equity theory perspective, several researchers have reported a positive relationship between fairness and satisfaction (Clemmer and Schneider, 1996; Huppertz et al., 1978; Oliver and Swan, 1989; Seiders and Berry, 1998). That is, consumer perceptions of satisfaction will increase as firms recover from their failure in a fair manner. As such, consumer perceptions of satisfaction following a service failure may be somewhat shaped by their perceptions of fairness during the recovery process. Researchers have also linked service recovery to consumer satisfaction (Gilly, 1987; Goodwin and Ross, 1992; Kelley and Davis, 1994; McCollough and Berry, 1996; Oliver and Swan, 1989; Singh and Wilkes, 1996; Smith et al., 1998; Tax et al., 1998). In these studies, satisfaction fluctuates with the level of service recovery effort and seems to increase given an exemplary service recovery. As such, customer satisfaction is included in this research to examine its relationship with service failure and recovery.

2.4. Purchase intentions

Given that the cost of retaining an existing customer is less expensive than prospecting for a new customer (Spreng et al., 1995), purchase intention is a very important consideration for marketers. Purchase intentions are directly influenced by customer satisfaction (LaBarbera and Mazursky, 1983), and some suggest that satisfaction is more influential in forming one's purchase intentions than service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1994). Other researchers have also found a positive relationship between satisfaction and purchase intentions (Yi, 1990), and that firms can recover from almost any failure and preserve a customer's intent to repurchase from the firm in the future (Goodwin and Ross, 1992; Kelley et al., 1993). From an equity theory perspective, firms can successfully restore low purchase intent perceptions following a service failure by effectively resolving a consumer-perceived inequity. Researchers have similarly argued that firms can maintain customer retention by responding to service failures in a fair manner (Blodgett et al., 1993; Huppertz et al., 1978; Oliver and Swan, 1989; Seiders and Berry, 1998). These findings suggest that purchase intentions will remain stable, and possibly increase, when service recovery is effective. On the other hand, a poor service recovery effort may substantially reduce one's future intentions to purchase from the failing firm. Thus, purchase intention is included as a dependent variable in this research.

2.5. Positive WOM

The significance of WOM communications in the service sector is well documented (Davis et al., 1978; Day, 1980; George and Berry, 1981; Hartline and Jones, 1996; Zeithaml et al., 1985, 1993). WOM provides vital information about a

firm to consumers that oftentimes helps consumers decide whether or not to patronize a firm (Lundeen et al., 1995; Zeithaml et al., 1993). In this sense, WOM may prove beneficial in spurring a brand switch, and thereby assist a firm in gaining new customers. It follows from equity theory that firms can restore consumers' propensity to spread positive recommendations by responding fairly to an inequitable service failure (Goodwin and Ross, 1992; Seiders and Berry, 1998). Some researchers have similarly suggested that consumers are prone to spread negative WOM when they perceive an unfair response to a service failure (Blodgett et al., 1993; Seiders and Berry, 1998). Others suggest that a positive relationship exists between service recovery and WOM (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997). That is, positive WOM recommendations will increase as levels of service recovery increase.

In sum, the above theoretical arguments uphold a general theme. That is, a firm's service recovery effort may have important implications for levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM. The following section specifies hypotheses relevant to these variables.

3. Hypotheses

From the literature review, it seems plausible that poor service recoveries can further upset an already displeased customer. Given a service failure, customers may seek compensation for perceived damage or inconvenience caused by the failure. If customers do not perceive that they have been sufficiently compensated for the damage (i.e., a poor or "low level" of service recovery), they may feel even more annoyed than they were subsequent to the failure. Alternatively, moderate to high service recovery levels may have the opposite effect. As perceived recovery increases, it follows that ratings among the dependent variables will increase correspondingly. As such, the following hypotheses are offered.

Hypothesis 1a: Levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM will be less than their post-service failure levels after a low service recovery effort is perceived.

Hypothesis 1b: Levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, positive WOM will be greater than their post-service failure levels after a moderate or high service recovery effort is perceived.

As previously mentioned, the service recovery literature posits a "recovery paradox," whereby customer attitudes will be more favorable after a service recovery than they were prior to any service failure, provided the recovery effort is strong. This concept suggests that an effective recovery cannot only maintain customer loyalty, but also propel it to higher levels. Several theories provide insight into the

recovery paradox phenomenon. First, Oliver (1997) uses the expectancy disconfirmation theoretical framework to explain “secondary satisfaction” following a service failure (which encompasses the recovery paradox). From this perspective, consumers first compare expectations for recovery to their perceptions of service recovery performance. In the service recovery paradox scenario, consumer expectations for recovery are positively disconfirmed, which may yield a paradoxical situation where consumer perceptions of secondary satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction perceptions after the failure and recovery effort) are greater than their pre-failure satisfaction perceptions. Second, assimilation theory seems to partially explain the recovery paradox using a “contrast effect” (Anderson, 1973). This view suggests that performance above (below) expectations will be very high (very low). That is, consumers tend to magnify their ratings of satisfaction in the direction of the disconfirmation. Third, attribution theory’s augmenting principle (Kelley, 1973) may provide further insight into the paradox. From this view, a service failure can be viewed as an inhibitory cause, while a superior service recovery can be viewed as a facilitative cause. When consumers experience an event that includes both inhibitory and facilitative causes, they are likely to give the facilitative cause more weight. In a service recovery context, consumers who experience a service failure, followed by a superior recovery effort, may be prone to weigh the recovery effort relatively more when forming their secondary satisfaction levels. As such, Hypothesis 2 is stated.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals perceiving a high service recovery effort will rate their post-recovery satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM significantly higher than their pre-failure ratings for those same variables.

It seems likely that significant differences will exist in customer perceptions of the firm, depending upon the type of service recovery they feel they received. More specifically, perceptions may increase as the level of redress increases. It also appears reasonable that high recoveries result in the highest increases in consumer perceptions, followed by moderate and low recoveries, respectively. Hence, the following hypotheses are offered.

Hypothesis 3a: A high service recovery will result in higher ratings of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM than will a moderate or a low service recovery.

Hypothesis 3b: A moderate service recovery will result in higher ratings of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM than will a low service recovery.

The hypotheses in this study generally assert that a firm’s service recovery effort significantly influences consumer

perceptions of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM. Two studies (i.e., an experimental design and a field study) were conducted to test these hypotheses. The next section briefly discusses the research design and results of the two studies.

4. Study One

4.1. Research design

A pre-test–post-test between-subjects experimental design was developed for Study One. This design asked respondents to read a hypothetical script and use the information provided in the script to respond to measures of the dependent variables. This “role-playing” approach has been frequently employed in social science research (Carlsmith et al., 1976), and can have a high degree of realism, provided the scenarios are applicable and appropriate for the sample at hand (Brown, 1962; Kelman, 1968; Schultz, 1969).

For this study, a haircut was chosen as the focal service. This choice was determined using three criteria. One criterion for the choice was grounded in pre-test responses from 32 undergraduate business students who were asked (on a seven-point scale, anchored by “never” and “very often”) to indicate the extent to which they patronize several services on a regular basis. Each service rated was based on prior research that suggested the selected industries were prone to service failure (Day and Bodur, 1978). These students were also asked to indicate (on a seven-point scale, anchored by “never” and “very often”) the degree to which they experience poor service for each service. The pre-test revealed that students regularly use haircut services (mean = 5.94, SD = 0.827) and often experience poor haircut service (mean = 5.27, SD = 1.38). These mean values were compared to each scale’s theoretical midpoint of “4.” For both scales, these means were significantly greater than the midpoint ($t = 13.28$ and 5.20 , respectively, $p < 0.01$).

Another criterion for the decision to use haircut services pertains to the consumer involvement concept of social risk (Kapferer and Laurent, 1985). Students could conceivably recognize a perceived “social risk” regarding the negative consequences of a “bad” haircut. That is, students may perceive that a bad haircut will temporarily diminish their personal appearance and attractiveness. As this perceived risk increases, it seems appropriate that one’s involvement with the haircut purchase also increases (Lamb et al., 1996). Given a service failure and a recovery effort, this involvement could presumably produce changes in a person’s behavior and attitude toward the haircut service.

To develop the hypothetical scenarios, a list of potential haircut service recovery strategies (i.e., apology, refund, discount, etc.) were distributed to 10 business administra-

tion graduate students. The students ranked the potential remedies in terms of the perceived level of service recovery (i.e., 1=low, 2=moderate, 3=high). The author then used the remedy rankings to develop an overall scenario. For example, the “high service recovery” haircut scenario was developed by incorporating several positively ranked remedies into the script (i.e., listening to the customer, showing empathy, apologizing, offering refunds, resolving problems, and offering future discounts). Likewise, the “moderate service recovery” scenario was crafted by employing a few positively ranked remedies (i.e., listening, apologizing, and fixing the problem), and the “low service recovery” scenario employed only one remedy (i.e., listening). Subsequently, 17 undergraduate marketing students ranked the written hypothetical scenarios once again in terms of the perceived level of service recovery (i.e., 1=low, 2=moderate, 3=high). All 17 students correctly perceived the scenarios as the author intended (i.e., they correctly classified the high service recovery effort as “high”; the moderate service recovery effort as “moderate”; and the low service recovery effort as “low”). These service recovery scenarios can be viewed in the bottom half of Appendix A.

4.1.1. Sample and experimental procedures

Experimental booklets were distributed to a convenience sample of 406 university students at a major southeastern university. Study One’s respondents were 46% male with a median age of 21 years. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of four experimental groups. Three of the groups were subjected to an experimental situation involving a service failure, while one group was not exposed to failure, thereby acting as a control group. The four groups in this study were approximately equal in size, ranging from 99 to 107.

Prior to exposure to experimental (control) conditions, the experimental booklet supplied subjects with an “introductory scenario.” This scenario provided a brief explanation of a hypothetical service history with a haircut establishment. This initial vignette was offered to each of the four groups, and attempted to establish “baseline” levels for the dependent variables that were equal across all four groups. (The introductory scenario is shown at the top of Appendix A.) Once this “baseline” scenario was read, the respondents were asked to respond to measures regarding satisfaction, purchase intent, and WOM. The purpose of measuring these variables at “Time One” (i.e., pre-experiment) was to determine if differences on these variables existed prior to exposure to the service failure scenarios. As such, it served as a data check of the levels among some of the dependent variables prior to the experimental manipulations.

4.1.2. Time One measures

A three-item purchase intent measure was constructed specifically for a haircut service (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

The three items were evaluated on seven-point likert-type scales, and their scores were summed to form an overall index ($\alpha=0.96$). Positive WOM here refers to the likelihood that respondents will recommend the service to a friend. A three-item measure of WOM was also developed for this study with items similar to those found in the extant literature (Goodwin and Ross, 1992; Hartline and Jones, 1996). The three items were measured on seven-point, likert-type scales, and item scores were summed to form an overall WOM measure ($\alpha=0.97$). Satisfaction with the haircut service was measured using a three-item scale adapted from prior research (e.g., Bitner, 1990; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Crosby and Stephens, 1987). The three items were measured on seven-point likert-type scales, and scores were summed to form a scale for satisfaction ($\alpha=0.96$). (All scale items utilized in this study can be viewed in Appendix B.)

4.1.3. Time Two measures

Once respondents completed the “Time One” measurement section of the experimental booklet, they were instructed to turn the page and read the experimental manipulation. This scenario depicted a “current visit” to a haircut service. For the three groups, this visit consisted of an identical service failure. For the control group, this synopsis comprised a typical satisfactory haircut encounter. (These manipulation scenarios are offered in Appendix A.) After the scenario was read, the respondents were instructed to answer the same scale items answered at Time One (satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM). The purpose of this measurement was to check the validity of the service failure manipulation (Perdue and Summers, 1986). In this sense, the manipulation check indicates whether or not respondents correctly perceived a service failure when it occurred in the script.

4.1.4. Time Three measures

Following the service failure measurement, respondents were directed to turn the page of the experimental booklet and continue the scenario. At this point, respondents were presented with one of the pre-tested service recovery scenarios. These levels exemplified high, moderate, and low service recovery efforts. (The three experimental groups are delineated by the level of service recovery received. The control group was not subjected to this measurement, as its members received satisfactory service.) Regarding the experimental groups, the purpose of the Time Three measurement was to determine the extent to which the dependent variables of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM changed in response to a service recovery effort.

At the end of Time Three measurement, a question was incorporated to examine the realism of the scenario (Carlsmith et al., 1976; Goodwin and Ross, 1992). Respondents were asked “How realistic was the scenario in this

study?” The item was evaluated on a seven-point scale ranging from “very unrealistic” to “very realistic.” The mean response for the item was 5.34 (SD=1.60). When the mean was compared to the scale midpoint (4), a significant difference was found (t -value=16.96, $p < 0.01$), providing some support for using hypothetical scenarios in this analysis.

4.2. Preliminary results

4.2.1. Data check: Time One

Given the relationships among the dependent variables, MANOVA was used to assess the potential differences in levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM prior to the service failure. As Table 1 shows, no significant differences were found among the groups’ satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM prior to a service failure either at the multivariate (Wilks $\Lambda = 0.97$; $F = 1.467$, ns) or univariate level. Thus, these dependent variables did not statistically differ among the four groups prior to the service failure.

4.2.2. Manipulation check: Time Two

The objective of this analysis was twofold: (1) to assess if satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM decreased across experimental groups, following a service failure and (2) to assess if these variables decreased equally across experimental groups after service failure. Contrasts based on paired sample t -tests between mean levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and WOM at Times One and Two showed that these variables decreased following a service failure within each experimental condition. As shown in Table 2, the means of satisfaction, purchase intent, and WOM decreased significantly after the failure across the three experimental groups from Time One to Time Two. In addition, these decreases in means were equal across the high, low, and moderate levels of service recovery. MANOVA across these groups showed no sig-

nificant multivariate (Wilks $\Lambda = 0.97$, $F = 1.65$, ns) or univariate differences (p -levels ranging from 0.25 to 0.86 across variables).

4.2.3. Results of hypotheses tests

Hypothesis 1a predicted that levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM would be below their post-service failure levels in the low service recovery condition. Hypothesis 1a was examined using paired sample t -tests between Time Two (i.e., directly after the service failure) and Time Three (i.e., after a low service recovery effort). The objective of this analysis was to determine whether or not a poor service recovery effort results in lower values on the dependent variables over and above that which occurred post-service failure within each experimental condition. As depicted in the top portion of Table 3 (low service recovery group), the group receiving a low service recovery effort showed significant decreases in their ratings of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM post-service failure. That is, a low service recovery compounded customer discontent over and above that discontent perceived (by the customer) subsequent to service failure. Stated differently, the finding suggests that poor service recoveries can exacerbate customer displeasure, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1a.

Hypothesis 1b predicted that levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM would be greater than their post-service failure levels for a moderate or high service recovery effort. In this instance, the aim of the t -tests was to assess the degree to which consumer perceptions of the dependent variables increased, above their post-service failure ratings (Time Two), among individuals receiving high and moderate service recovery efforts (Time Three). The top portion of Table 3 shows that customer levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM did increase when a moderate or high service recovery was achieved (all t -values were significant at 0.01). That is, at Time Three, all dependent variables were significantly greater than at Time

Table 1
MANOVA results for time one measurement: Study One data check

Variable	Experimental group				
	High service recovery	Moderate service recovery	Low service recovery	Control group	
<i>Means (SD)</i>					
Satisfaction	18.59 (2.54)	19.05 (2.38)	18.94 (2.73)	19.42 (2.20)	
Purchase intent	19.11 (2.51)	19.53 (2.20)	19.19 (2.48)	19.88 (1.59)	
WOM	17.16 (3.53)	17.31 (3.77)	17.73 (3.33)	17.69 (3.68)	
Variable	Univariate statistics		Multivariate statistics		
	<i>F</i> -values	<i>p</i> -Level	Wilks Λ	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -Level
			0.97	1.467	0.16
Satisfaction	1.86	0.14			
Purchase intent	2.49	0.06			
WOM	0.633	0.59			

Means reported for all variables are based on summed-item scores. “SD” signifies standard deviations. Sample size = 406 (all four groups analyzed).

Table 2
Paired sample *t*-tests between Time One and Time Two: Study One manipulation check

	Time One mean (SD)	Time Two mean (SD)	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Level
<i>High service recovery group</i>				
Satisfaction	18.63 (2.54)	8.43 (3.68)	25.35	0.01
Purchase intent	19.10 (2.51)	10.51 (4.31)	20.38	0.01
WOM	17.16 (3.53)	8.60 (4.10)	18.54	0.01
<i>Moderate service recovery group</i>				
Satisfaction	19.05 (2.38)	9.15 (3.62)	24.44	0.01
Purchase intent	19.53 (2.20)	11.53 (4.45)	19.03	0.01
WOM	17.31 (3.77)	8.45 (4.27)	18.8	0.01
<i>Low service recovery group</i>				
Satisfaction	18.93 (2.73)	8.50 (3.90)	24.7	0.01
Purchase intent	19.19 (2.48)	10.71 (4.46)	19.84	0.01
WOM	17.72 (3.35)	8.30 (4.47)	18.91	0.01

Means reported for all variables are based on summed-item scores. “SD” signifies standard deviation. Sample size ranges from 99 to 107 across experimental groups.

Two for both the moderate and high conditions. Hence, Hypothesis 1b is supported.

Hypothesis 2 was also analyzed using paired sample *t*-tests between Time One (prior to service failure) and Time Three (post-service recovery). The purpose of this analysis was to examine the degree to which the service “recovery paradox” existed. As the bottom portion of Table 3 depicts, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. In the high service recovery group (Time Three), the post-service recovery means for satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM were significantly (0.01) below their initial levels (i.e., Time One), rather than above.

MANOVA was used to investigate Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b. The objective of this analysis was to determine whether or not significant differences occur in satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM among groups receiving various levels of service recovery. Table 4 shows the results for this analysis. Group differences were found among the dependent variables at both the multivariate (Wilks $\Lambda = 0.16$, $F = 92.83$, $p < 0.01$) and univariate levels. In addition, Scheffe’s test was performed between each pair of service recovery groups to further test Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b. The purpose of this analysis was to determine where the mean differences occurred (in the dependent

Table 3
Paired sample *t*-tests between Time Two and Time Three (Study One)

	Time Two mean (SD)	Time Three mean (SD)	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Level
<i>High service recovery group</i>				
Satisfaction	8.43 (3.68)	16.04 (3.84)	21.43	0.01
Purchase intent	10.51 (4.31)	16.35 (4.06)	14.96	0.01
WOM	8.61 (4.10)	15.29 (4.41)	15.93	0.01
<i>Moderate service recovery group</i>				
Satisfaction	9.06 (3.52)	15.22 (3.21)	17.11	0.01
Purchase intent	11.43 (4.37)	15.72 (3.51)	12.15	0.01
WOM	8.32 (4.10)	13.44 (4.13)	12.77	0.01
<i>Low service recovery group</i>				
Satisfaction	8.50 (3.90)	5.19 (2.79)	11.02	0.01
Purchase intent	10.71 (4.46)	5.22 (3.13)	14.32	0.01
WOM	8.30 (4.49)	5.06 (3.06)	8.58	0.01

Paired sample *t*-tests between Time One and Time Three for high service recovery experimental group (Study One)

	Time One mean (SD)	Time Three mean (SD)	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Level
High service recovery group				
Satisfaction	18.59 (2.54)	16.04 (3.82)	7.09	0.01
Purchase intent	19.10 (2.51)	16.35 (4.06)	7.34	0.01
WOM	17.16 (3.53)	15.29 (4.41)	4.25	0.01

Means reported for all variables are based on summed-item scores. “SD” signifies standard deviation. Sample size ranges from 99 to 107 across experimental groups.

Table 4
MANOVA results measured post-service recovery (Study One)

Variable	Experimental group						
	High service recovery	Moderate service recovery	Low service recovery				
<i>Mean (SD)</i>							
Satisfaction	16.05 (3.84)	15.17 (3.21)	5.13 (2.78)				
Purchase intent	16.35 (4.05)	15.67 (3.51)	5.16 (3.13)				
WOM	15.29 (4.41)	13.37 (4.13)	5.06 (3.06)				
Variable	Univariate statistics			Multivariate statistics			
	<i>F</i> -Values	<i>p</i> -Levels	Eta ²	Wilks Λ	<i>F</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Level	Eta ²
Satisfaction	358.73	0.01 ^{1,2}	0.70	0.16	92.84	0.01	0.61
Purchase intent	324.89	0.01 ^{1,2}	0.68				
WOM	205.11	0.01 ^{1,2,3}	0.57				

Means reported for all variables are based on summed-item scores. The superscripted numbers represent mean comparisons between the high, moderate, and low service recovery groups. Specifically, 1=mean difference between high and low, 2=mean difference between moderate and low, and 3=mean difference between high and moderate. Superscripts indicate that significant mean differences exist between the noted pair of service recovery groups. This mean difference significance is based on a Scheffé's test (one-way ANOVA post hoc tests) at the 0.01 level. For example, mean differences are found in purchase intent between (1) high and low and (2) moderate and low (at the 0.01 level).

variables) between service recovery groups. Regarding purchase intent, a significant difference was not found between the high and moderate level service recovery groups ($p=0.462$). Similarly, a difference between these two groups was not detected for satisfaction ($p=0.205$). All other hypothesized mean differences across all other dependent variables between service recovery levels were significant at the 0.01 level. Thus, of the 15 possible mean differences examined over the three experimental recovery groups, 13 were significant, largely supporting Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b. Furthermore, the effect sizes for these differences (i.e., eta²) were quite large.

In sum, four of five study hypotheses found strong support for the experimental scenario setting of Study One. However, the "recovery paradox" hypothesis was not supported. To further test the generalizability of Study One's results, a field study involving an actual service failure and actual consumers of the service was conducted in Study Two.

5. Study Two

Study Two is a partial replication of Study One that attempts to enhance the first study's generalizability by testing the hypotheses with actual service failures and recovery efforts in a different service (i.e., Internet service), and a different methodology (i.e., field study). The author chose an Internet provider as the focal service in Study Two primarily because the provider had recently experienced a widespread (and well publicized) service failure (i.e., long connection delays, slow uploading, and/or other various delays). In particular, the Internet provider had recently advertised a pricing promotion, whereby consumers could receive unlimited Internet access for a flat rate (i.e.,

US\$19.95). An overwhelming number of consumers subsequently took advantage of the newly advertised pricing plan, and thus the provider's customer base grew substantially. The Internet provider, however, was not apparently equipped with enough servers and modems to meet their customers' demand. As a result, many customers experienced weeks (or even months) of service breakdowns. Study Two attempted to capture consumer perceptions regarding the Internet provider's service recovery efforts. The Internet provider responded to its service failures overall by pledging to "fix the problem." Customer perceptions of the recovery effort process varied across customers, however, due to the heterogeneity of service (i.e., empathy, courtesy, etc.) provided by the firm's employees (i.e., telephone customer service representatives). Study Two attempted to capture consumer perceptions regarding the Internet provider's service recovery efforts.

5.1. Sample and field study procedures

The author distributed 400 surveys to active complainants of a national Internet service provider. That is, the respondents in Study Two consisted of current customers who actively voiced a service complaint to their Internet provider about a perceived service failure (e.g., lengthy connection delays, sporadic disconnections, and slow uploading). Within 2 days of the original complaint, a survey was mailed to the customers to capture their perceptions regarding the perceived service failure, as well as the firm's subsequent recovery efforts. Of the surveys mailed, the author received 114 usable complainant responses. All respondents included in the analysis indicated on the survey that they had experienced a service failure with the Internet provider during the past week. I also obtained a database of 114 non-study customers from the Internet

service provider to examine potential non-response bias. No significant differences were detected among age, gender, and service usage hours (i.e., the number of hours logged online in a given month) between my respondents and these non-study customers.

Study Two’s sample was 68% male with a median age of 24 years; 43% had some college experience, while 32% held an undergraduate college degree, and 16% held master’s or professional degrees. In addition, 49% of respondents reportedly used the Internet provider (20 h per week; 29% used the service 21–40 h per week; and 23% used the service more than 40 h per week.

Study Two respondents were first provided a brief description (in a cover letter) of the Internet provider’s promotional pricing plan (i.e., US\$19.95 per month for unlimited usage). The cover letter then explained some potential problems (i.e., service failures) relating to the pricing plan recently offered by the provider (i.e., connection delays, slow uploading, disconnections, etc.). Consistent with the procedures of Blodgett et al. (1993), the survey next asked respondents to retrospectively think about their Internet provider experiences prior to any problems caused (in their opinion) by the pricing plan response. The prior experiences may include past connection availability, technical support, services offered, ease of use, customer service, etc. This “Time One” measurement was necessary to replicate the testing of Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3a, and Hypothesis 3b, and to maintain consistency from Study One

to Study Two. After the Time One measurement was completed (i.e., prior perceptions), the survey asked respondents to indicate their current perceptions of the Internet provider. As such, respondents were asked to take into consideration all of their experiences with the provider (up to this moment). The “Time Two” measures were collected for purposes consistent with Study One. The specific measures utilized in Study Two are briefly discussed in the section below.

5.2. Measures

Study One’s Time One measures were slightly modified (from haircut service to Internet service) and incorporated once again in Study Two. In addition, one additional item for each dependent variable (i.e., satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM) was added to this analysis to help capture the domain of the constructs. The Time Two measures of Study Two were also slightly modified from Study One to reflect a different service (from haircuts to Internet providers). As with the Time One measures, some Time Two measurement items were added to this analysis as well (over and above those adapted from Study One). Post-service failure measures (i.e., Study One’s Time Two measures) were not collected in Study Two, as the field study was not amenable to such a data collection. Appendix C shows all of Study Two’s measures. Once the measures were collected, the author again employed paired

Table 5
Paired sample *t*-tests between Time One and Time Two for high service recovery group (Study Two)

High service recovery group	Time One mean (SD)	Time Two mean (SD)	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Level
Satisfaction	21.59 (5.16)	19.41 (7.02)	1.61	0.13
Purchase intent	22.18 (3.59)	20.65 (4.72)	1.79	0.09
WOM	21.24 (6.81)	19.24 (7.08)	1.83	0.09

MANOVA results measured post-service recovery (Study Two)

Variable	Field study group			Multivariate statistics			
	High service recovery	Moderate service recovery	Low service recovery	Wilks Λ	<i>F</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Level	Eta ²
<i>Mean (SD)</i>							
Satisfaction	19.41 (7.02)	18.81 (6.48)	12.54 (6.46)	0.61	5.86	0.01	0.22
Purchase intent	20.65 (4.72)	17.53 (7.06)	12.83 (7.73)				
WOM	19.24 (7.08)	16.86 (6.73)	12.69 (7.46)				
Variable	Univariate statistics						
	<i>F</i> -Values	<i>p</i> -Levels	Eta ²				
Satisfaction	13.61	0.01 ^{1,2}	0.20				
Purchase intent	9.97	0.01 ^{1,2}	0.16				
WOM	7.22	0.01 ^{1,2}	0.12				

Means reported for all variables are based on summed-item scores. The superscripted numbers represent mean comparisons between the high, moderate, and low service recovery groups. Specifically, 1=mean difference between high and low, 2=mean difference between moderate and low, and 3=mean difference between high and moderate. Superscripts indicate that significant mean differences exist between the noted pair of service recovery groups. This mean difference significance is based on a Scheffé’s test (one-way ANOVA post hoc tests) at the 0.01 level. For example, mean differences are found in purchase intent between (1) high and low and (2) moderate and low (at the 0.01 level). “SD” signifies standard deviation. Sample size=17 for the “high service recovery group.”

sample *t*-tests and MANOVA to retest Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3a, and Hypothesis 3b. The next section briefly describes the results of these analyses.

6. Results

Hypothesis 2 was analyzed using paired sample *t*-tests between pre-service failure (i.e., Time One) and post-service recovery (i.e., Time Two). The purpose of this analysis (consistent with Study One) was to examine the degree to which the service “recovery paradox” existed. For this analysis, respondents were placed into a “perceived service recovery” category (similar to the experimental groups in Study One — high, moderate, and low) based on a question assessing their perception of the Internet provider’s recovery effort (i.e., 1=minimum effort, 2=moderate effort, and 3=high effort). As the top portion of Table 5 shows, Hypothesis 2 was not supported in Study Two. These results are consistent with Study One’s results. In the high service recovery group, the post-service recovery means for satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM were below their pre-service failure levels, rather than above. However, the post-service recovery levels were not significantly below (at the 0.05 level) their pre-service failure ratings. That is, although both studies do not support the “recovery paradox” hypothesis, Study Two indicates that high recovery efforts among Internet services may have a more positive impact on customer evaluations than the same recovery effort among haircut firms.

MANOVA was used to investigate Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b. As in Study One, the objective of this analysis was to determine whether or not significant differences occurred in satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM among groups perceiving varying service recovery levels. The bottom half of Table 5 shows the results for this analysis. Group differences were found among the dependent variables at both the multivariate (Wilks $\Lambda=0.61$, $F=5.86$, $p<0.01$) and univariate levels. In addition, Scheffe’s test was performed on each pair of service recovery groups to retest Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b. In this analysis, a significant difference was not found between the high and moderate service recovery groups (at the 0.05 level) for all dependent variables. However, all other mean differences between levels were significant at the 0.01 level, partially supporting Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b. These results are somewhat consistent with Study One’s results in that all mean differences across both studies were found significant between the moderate and low groups, as well as between the high and low groups. The results are also consistent with the mean differences between the high and moderate groups for both satisfaction and purchase intent ratings. However, Study Two found no significant difference between the high and moderate groups for positive WOM, whereas Study One did find significant

differences among positive WOM (across moderate and high groups).

7. Discussion

7.1. Summary

The two studies here examined the effects of service recovery on key consumer perception variables in both experimental and field study analyses. Study One utilized hypothetical scenarios to manipulate high, moderate, and low levels of service recovery efforts. Measures of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM were employed to assess the degree to which diverse service recoveries influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Study Two employed a cross-sectional field study (with actual failures and actual recoveries) in an attempt to generalize some of Study One’s findings. In general, the results of both studies suggest that effective service recoveries can enhance consumer perceptions of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM. Given the sparse amount of empirical work on service recovery, it is hoped that the studies offer implications for researchers and practitioners to further study and better understand the processes and outcomes of service recovery.

7.2. Implications

The results of these studies have important implications for service managers and academicians, as they suggest that poor service recovery efforts may influence consumers to discontinue service with such organizations. As such, poor recoveries may translate into lost revenues (due to customer turnover) for a failing firm. Given that it oftentimes costs considerably less to keep a current customer than it does to attract a new one (Hart et al., 1990), poor service recoveries may also increase a firm’s sales and administration costs associated with recruiting new customers.

The results also reveal that moderate and high service recovery efforts significantly increase satisfaction, purchase intentions, and positive WOM above their respective post-failure ratings. These results suggest that firms can maintain customer retention and loyalty through effective service recoveries. Once again, this finding encourages the formulation of a service recovery strategy. However, the results suggest there is not a significant difference in satisfaction and purchase intent between groups receiving high and moderate service recoveries. Respondents for both studies rated purchase intentions and satisfaction approximately equal for both high and moderate recovery efforts. This result indicates that haircut and Internet service firms may not benefit (in terms of heightened satisfaction and purchase intent) from expending recovery efforts beyond the moderate level. Study Two also suggests that firms may not benefit from providing customers anything over and above a

moderate recovery effort. These findings could potentially have economic implications for managers. In particular, managers may not experience increased levels of customer satisfaction and purchase intent by spending resources (e.g., money and time) above those that result in moderate service recoveries. In sum, “more” (recovery effort) may not always be “more valuable.” There may be a recovery threshold, per se, whereby recoveries over and above this level go unnoticed or unrewarded by the customer.

However, this implication is offered with a caveat, as levels of positive WOM were found in Study One to significantly increase from a moderate to high service recovery. That is, consumers in Study One rated WOM for “high” service recoveries significantly above their respective ratings for “moderate” recoveries. The inconsistencies from Study One to Study Two regarding this finding may be due to the nature of the service. Haircuts for a younger student sample may be more personally relevant (i.e., higher involvement levels) than Internet services. Furthermore, given the findings of several researchers regarding the potential impact of favorable WOM to a firm’s customer base (Blodgett et al. 1997; Collier 1995), the enhanced level of positive WOM between moderate and high service recovery levels suggests that going the “extra effort” after service failure may have strategic benefits.

The results of the two studies suggest a proactive consideration for service managers pertaining to employee training. It may prove advantageous for service firms to incorporate the service recovery doctrine into the socialization mix. This socialization process may include teaching employees the impact of service recovery, as well as their role in achieving a sound recovery. Further, managers may profit from streamlining the recovery process, possibly through the development of service recovery teams. These teams may help firms respond quicker and more efficiently to service failures. Similarly, firms may choose to empower their employees to respond quickly to customer problems. As such, service managers may also consider inaugurating a behavioral reward package, whereby employees are rewarded for solid recovery efforts.

An intriguing non-supported hypothesis in this research pertains to the “recovery paradox.” The results suggest that haircut services and Internet services are unlikely to fully regain initial levels of satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM, even given a superior recovery. This finding is contrary to the paradox espoused by McCollough and Berry (1996) and others. However, this result seems reasonable given the high involvement regarding haircut services. In the quest for ideal personal appearance, students may be less likely to excuse a poor haircut service. Even in these cases, however, the variables experienced notable increases following the recovery effort. With the Internet service failure (i.e., connection delays, disconnections, slow uploading, etc.), it is possible that consumers were so frustrated that the firm could not fully recover even despite a valiant effort.

8. Limitations and future research

As with most research, these studies have limitations. First, the results found here may be markedly different given another service setting, and may be limited due to the convenient nature of the samples. Second, the somewhat artificial nature of the lab setting of Study One detracts from external validity. Third, the Internet service respondents (Study Two) may represent a biased sample in that those who responded may be those more likely to complain. Despite these limitations, the studies here contribute to the service recovery literature by offering a unique field study, interesting results, and valuable managerial implications.

One issue for future consideration pertains to service recovery strategy. As previously mentioned, it may prove useful for service firms to develop a strategy for service recovery. Researchers can likely aid this development by modeling such strategies. For instance, one could model the strategic constructs crucial to effective service recovery (e.g., socialization, empowerment, behavioral rewards, role congruence, teamwork). Another worthwhile area for future research involves modeling the structural relationships between satisfaction, purchase intent, and positive WOM. In particular, it seems beneficial to understand how equity theory (i.e., perceived fairness) influences satisfaction, positive WOM, and purchase intent. In addition, it seems worthy to better understand the relative influence of distributive fairness (i.e., outcome-related fairness) and procedural fairness (i.e., process-related fairness) on satisfaction, positive WOM, and purchase intent. Under certain scenarios, it seems plausible that procedural fairness (distributive fairness) would play a more pronounced role than would distributive fairness (procedural fairness). Structural equation modeling may help both service managers and researchers decide which combination of service recovery strategies (i.e., those that foster procedural fairness vs. those that foster distributive fairness) are most appropriate for a given service failure scenario. Future research can also help shed light on the effect that some potential moderators may have on the service recovery process. For example, researchers and managers would likely benefit from better understanding how customer gender, level of involvement, personality factors, situational factors, and product-related factors may affect consumer perceptions subsequent to a service failure and recovery effort. Lastly, it seems worthwhile to further examine the “recovery paradox.” While the paradox was not supported in the studies reported here, it may eventually occur given a long period of consistently good customer service (subsequent to a service failure). That is, though the paradox may not hold in the short run, perhaps it can be regained over time provided that customers perceive consistent satisfactory encounters in the future. Research in these areas will likely enrich our understanding of the service experience.

Appendix A.

A.1. Introductory scenario

Suppose for a moment that you have used ABC Haircut service for the past 6 months. The cost of an ABC Haircut is US\$8.00, and ABC is located 5 miles from your residence. During the past 6 months, you have been satisfied with ABC's haircut quality.

A.2. Manipulation scenarios

A.2.1. Service failure scenario

Please recall the prior scenario information. Now, imagine that you notice that it is time for a haircut. Thus, you make an appointment to get your haircut at ABC. You drive to ABC's haircut service and patiently wait (in the waiting area) for your appointment. After you receive your haircut, you pay US\$8.00 to the hairstylist for the cost of the haircut. In addition, you pay US\$2.00 to your hairstylist as gratuity. Upon arriving home, you take a good look at your new haircut in the mirror. In doing so, you notice that the hairstylist has done a poor job cutting your hair. Specifically, it appears that your hair has been unevenly cut.

A.2.2. Control group scenario

Please recall the prior scenario information. Now, imagine that you notice that it is time for a haircut. Thus, you make an appointment to get your haircut at ABC. You drive to ABC's haircut service and patiently wait (in the waiting area) for your appointment. After you receive your haircut, you pay US\$8.00 to the hairstylist for the cost of the haircut. In addition, you pay US\$2.00 to your hairstylist as gratuity. Upon arriving home, you notice that the hairstylist has provided the same consistency and quality you have received from ABC in past visits.

A.3. Service recovery scenarios

A.3.1. High service recovery group

Please recall the poor service you received from ABC Haircut service. Now, suppose that you return to ABC to explain your problem. Upon doing so, the hairstylist carefully listens to your complaint. Afterwards, the hairstylist expresses a sense of compassion regarding the problem and apologizes for the mishap. Further, the hairstylist immediately refunds your US\$10.00 (US\$8.00 for the haircut cost

and US\$2.00 tip). Moreover, ABC successfully fixes the problem (i.e., straightens your hair). Finally, ABC's manager offers you a free haircut upon your next visit.

A.3.2. Moderate service recovery group

Please recall the poor service you received from ABC Haircut service. Now suppose that you return to ABC to explain your problem. Upon doing so, the hairstylist listens to your complaint. Afterwards, the hairstylist apologizes for the mishap. In addition, the hairstylist successfully fixes the problem (i.e., straightens your hair).

A.3.3. Low service recovery group

Please recall the poor service you received from ABC Haircut service. Now suppose that you return to ABC to explain your problem. Upon doing so, the hairstylist listens to your complaint, but does nothing to resolve the problem.

Appendix B. Measurement scales: Study One

All items were measured on a seven-point scale. Additionally, the superscripts refer to the scale anchor points for each question. As such, 1 = "not at all satisfied" to "very satisfied," 2 = "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," 3 = "improbable" to "probable," 4 = "very unlikely" to "very likely." The (*) superscript refers to coefficient alpha. N/A refers to "not applicable."

Measurement scale items	Time One α^*	Time Two α^*	Time Three α^*
<i>Satisfaction</i>	0.94	0.94	0.96
I am satisfied with ABC's haircut. ¹			
In my opinion, ABC provides a satisfactory haircut service. ²			
How satisfied are you with the quality of ABC's Haircut service? ¹			
<i>Purchase intent</i>	0.86	0.97	0.96
I intend to use ABC Haircut service for my next haircut. ³			
I will continue using ABC for my haircut service. ²			
How likely are you to purchase your next haircut from ABC Haircut service? ⁴			
<i>WOM</i>	0.91	0.96	0.97
How likely are you to spread positive WOM about ABC's Haircut service? ⁴			

I would recommend ABC
Haircut service to my friends.²
If my friends were looking for
a haircut service, I would tell
them to try ABC.²

Appendix C. Measurement scales: Study Two

All items were measured on a seven-point scale. Additionally, the superscripts refer to the scale anchor points for each question. As such, 1 = “not at all satisfied” to “very satisfied,” 2 = “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” 3 = “improbable” to “probable,” 4 = “very unlikely” to “very likely.” The (*) superscript refers to coefficient α . N/A refers to “not applicable.” An asterisk (*) at the beginning of a sentence means the question was added for Study Two.

Measurement scale items	Time One α^*	Time Two α^*
<i>Satisfaction</i>	0.94	0.95
I am satisfied with (Internet provider)'s online service. ¹		
In my opinion, (Internet provider) provides a satisfactory online service. ²		
*As a whole, I am not satisfied with (Internet provider)'s online service. ²		
How satisfied are you with the quality of (Internet provider)'s online service? ¹		
<i>Purchase intent</i>	0.93	0.94
The next time I desire an online service I intend to use (Internet provider). ³		
I will continue using (Internet provider) for my online services. ²		
The next time you are in the market for online service, how likely are you to purchase that online service from (Internet provider). ⁴		
*The next time I purchase an online service, I will not use (Internet provider) as my online provider. ²		
<i>WOM</i> ¹	0.93	0.94
How likely are you to spread positive WOM about (Internet provider)'s online service? ⁴		
I would recommend (Internet provider)'s online service to my friends. ²		
*Given my experience with (Internet provider), I would not recommend their service to my friends. ²		
If my friends were looking for an online service, I would tell them to try (Internet provider). ²		

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