

SERVICE RECOVERY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA'S HOTEL INDUSTRY

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***Abstract**---This objective of this study is to examine the relationship between service recovery towards customer loyalty in the hotel industries. Role of customer satisfaction is also measured as a control variable in between service recovery and customer loyalty. This study is used a quantitative method thus it uses a questionnaire survey form to collect data from respondents. This study used a convenience sampling technique where data were collected and administered by the respondents who visited the selected hotel during specific time at various days in a month that being selected. In total the data collections took 10 days to complete. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 145 were returned (48 percent response rate). Data analysis were done using the structural equation modelling. The results indicate that service recovery does influences customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. It also recorded that customer satisfaction play a vital role towards customer loyalty rather than a direct relationship between service recovery towards customer loyalty. Hotel industries should have focused on handling service recoveries in order to avoid customers' frustration and negative customer experiences.*

***Keyword**---Customer loyalty, Customer satisfaction, Service recovery, Hotel*

I. Introduction

Reports related to tourism and hotels recorded that there are at least 300,000 hotels rooms nationwide. The numbers are not including the other types of service providers that offers accommodation services such as homestay that is also booming due to increase in demand especially from the international tourist. It was stated that hotels need to be innovative in their marketing campaign and advertisements in order to win the competitions. New players at the same time need to put much efforts in competing with the top and prominent brand name in the market.

On the other side, high numbers in total of hotel providers has led to high supply and low demand when the economy faced slowdown globally. It was reported that numbers of tourist drooped by 20% especially from China and Australia due to the recent virus issues. Local tourist also becoming lesser due to the virus pandemic that not only affected the hotel business nut the overall tourism industry.

During the current situations, loyal customer is important in keeping the business running. Acquisition drives could be limited due to many external factors while at the same time economy slowdown have been reported to becoming worse

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until 2021. Hotel need to ensure that they provide excellent services and find opportunities in providing maximum value added services to keep customer satisfied and loyal.

II. Literature review

Customer loyalty

Almost all business organizations are aiming to achieved as many as possible loyal customer. Customer loyalty is the highest level of customer support towards business organizations. It is an act of customer who will repeatedly purchase or subscribed the services from the same business organizations (Kotler, 1994). By definition, customer loyalty (Kotler, 1992) is “the result of consistently positive emotional experience, physical attribute-based satisfaction and perceived value of an experience, which includes the product or services”. It was reported by past research that service provider need to blend the customer experience with combination of value and emotion into a cohesive customer experiences (Kotler, 2017). According to (Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018; Shafiq, Mostafiz, & Taniguchi, 2019) business organizations need to put effort towards customer in order to manage the customer loyalty (M. Shamsudin et al., 2015). Business organizations may need to change their overall business strategy by focusing more towards customer and understanding their needs. Past research indicates that it involves many elements that business organization need to change in order to suit the current customer taste, preferences and purchase intentions (S. Hassan, Shamsudin, & Mustapha, 2019).

Among the challenge in setting the business strategy towards maintaining customer loyalty is the brand platform (Thiruvattal, 2017). Business organizations need to specific where are they heading in terms of branding. Hotel industry faced a lot of challenges within the industry. There are many types of hotel that recently exist in the market (M. F. Shamsudin, Razak, & Salem, 2018). Customer at the same time become more complicated and they keep on changing their preferences based on trends and knowledge. Beside hotels, customer now may have the option to stay in the apartment rentals, homestay, couch surfing or even bed and breakfast. The completion among hotel itself are challenges where there are airport hotels, business hotels, casino hotels, resorts, service apartments and suite hotels. On top of that there is also a competition between the hotel categories by ranking ranging from one start to five star. Customer today have too many choices to suit their objective and purpose of selecting the accommodation.

Hotel therefore need to find their own unique selling point by proper market positioning. Hotel need to rearrange their customer experience architecture in order to compete and sustain in the market (B. Kadir & Shamsudin, 2019). Some hotels want to be recognized as Muslim friendly hotel, green hotels and many more. Such positioning will have managed to attract customer attention and desire to stay. Hotels need to ensure that their service level is up to the standard of customer expectations (Baharudin Kadir, Shamsudin, Nurul, & Mohd, 2020). Understanding customer needs and expectations may need some study based on their target market and segments. Beside that it was also recommended by (Razak & Shamsudin, 2019) that hotels must also allowed customer to know them. Basic marketing as stated by (Umasuthan, Park, & Ryu, 2017) stated that the success of business depends so much on customer. Customer will only go the business organizations once they know or got the information about the products. Communication is always the priority in business (Han & Hyun, 2017). Customer than will go through a standard process from the awareness towards the purchase actions. The communication must be done continuously in order to convince customers (Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011).

Hotel may also have introduced loyalty program to their customer in order to support and influence the repeat purchase campaign. There are many type of loyalty program but the main objective is the same (Sallaudin Hassan & Shamsudin,

2019). Hotels must have convinced the customer to come back by offering certain discounts or any other elements that may spark the desire of customer to always come back to the same hotels (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Papastathopoulos, 2019). Customer tends to be loyal once they know that their action not only will satisfied them but will be rewarded. Loyalty program, will also helps customer to stay in the business cycle besides easily got influenced by the competitor (Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018).

one of the best option hotel may do according to (Shafiq et al., 2019) is to make the customer fulfillment as simple and easier as possible. Hotels need to provide the best process that is hassle free and convenient to customer. Customer wanted to be treated nicely and they wanted everything to be fast and quick (S. Hassan et al., 2019). Hotels also should have focused on something that they can do best (Akroush & Mahadin, 2019). Hotels need to identify their key strength that is difficult to be imitate by others in the industry (Fernandes & Solimun, 2018). At the same time, it was proposed by (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin, Esa, & Ali, 2019) that hotels to make a continuous communication by visualizing the customer experiences in all media channel. Customer is easily influenced by best services and they always wanted to be pampered regardless whether their purpose is on business or holiday (Razak & Shamsudin, 2019).

Maintaining customer loyalty is not easy but the benefits to the business organizations is very great. Loyal customer will become the spoke person of the hotel (Amoako, Anabila, Asare Effah, & Kumi, 2017). They will talk about the good things and promote the services to others (Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019). It is the fact that customer will get easily convinced by a recommendation from someone that they know rather from the advertisements or the hotel sales team. Loyal customer has high tendency to promote the hotels by giving their testimonial. Another advantage of having loyal customer is their willingness to give feedback based on the services offered and their customer experiences (Abror et al., 2019). Customer feedback is important for the hotels in order to improve their overall services towards customer.

Overall, meeting and understand the customer needs and expectations is important (Amoako et al., 2017). Hotel for example must be able to get customer satisfied at the first place (Abu-Alhaja, Raja Yusof, Hashim, & Jaharuddin, 2019) before it can be prolonging to retention and loyal (Shafiq et al., 2019). It was recommended by past research (Ahmad et al., 2019) that in order to managed the customer loyalty, any business organizations may need to established their product or services differentiation. The hotel for example need to established the things that they are good at and could not find any other hotel services. That unique or differentiation should also be supported by a positive customer experiences in total. Further to that (Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018) suggested that emotional connections is needed in order to cultivate the loyalty spirit. The combination of all those in customer experiences will resulted to customer loyalty.

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is all about how the business organizations delivered their services towards meeting the perceived expectation of customer. In Marketing it is about delivering the value that being perceived by customer as high and meet their expectations (Khamis & AbRashid, 2018). Key success measurement for customer satisfaction is the ability of service provider to meet the customer expectations (Famiyeh, Asante-Darko, & Kwarteng, 2018). Service provider especially hotel in this context of research must ensure that they know what exactly that customer is looking after. The understanding can only be implemented once the hotels managed to gather all the relevant information about what is the expectations from customer (M. F. Shamsudin, Nurana, Aesya, & Nabi, 2018). Feedback, comment and suggestion can be gathered using survey method or any electronic media. The objective is to hear from customer how their past experiences and allowed them to comments to reflect some appreciations from the service provider (Han & Hyun, 2017).

Customer satisfaction can have derived from as simple as the products itself. Hotels need to provide a positive atmosphere or ambience so that customer got influenced by the situation (Bihamta, Jayashree, Rezaei, Okumus, & Rahimi, 2017). The used of proper ambience elements such as color, decorations, sound, music, aroma and cleanliness may provide the first positive experiences to customer towards customer satisfaction (Sukiman, Omar, Muhibudin, Yussof, & Mohamed, 2013). Hotels may also check through their current policies whether it has been left behind since almost hotels used a recent technologies and internet based applications in their servicing (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin et al., 2019). The hotel policies must be derived towards customer satisfaction. It should be spelt out and share among all the employee (Muhammad, Farid Shamsudin, & Hadi, 2016). Such things will reflect the commitment and intention from the hotel management towards providing excellent services to customer.

Customer satisfaction according to (Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019) can derived from a good communication between employee and customer. The employee act as a medium between service provider to customer and may stand chance to get more feedback and comments from customer. Hotels should hire dedicated employee that willing and fond of servicing customer (Amoako et al., 2017). Customer today is complicated as they need the employee to used adaptive strategy in order to understand them. Employee need to be more empathy in order to prosper the positive customer experiences. Besides that, employee must also be more proactive in providing the services (Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018). Customer would appreciate if their problems can be solving at only single point of employee (Tabrani, Amin, & Nizam, 2018). Hotels at the same time must also review their process related to customer in order to become more satisfied. The process such as registration, check out and any other related to customer should be revised towards a simpler that can promote the positive customer experiences.

Overall, customer satisfaction is important as the competition among the industry is getting fierce. Hotel industry at current is overflow with the numbers of supplier (Davras & Caber, 2019). Customer have more options to choose only the best that meet their demands. As such it would be good if hotel play proactive roles in understanding their customer (Hirata, 2019). The fluctuate of economy with the coming prediction of world recession may triggered the industry players to tight their customer by focusing on the retention. Satisfied customer have a strong attachment with the brand image. They will remain support the hotels regardless the campaign and promotion conducted by competitor (Zhang, Zhang, & Zhang, 2019). Satisfied customer may even put the competitor away as they believed that the value provided by the current hotel is good and good for money.

Customer satisfaction also derived from the benefits to cost formula. Customer will stay satisfied if they enjoyed more benefits as compared to the amount of their investment (Razak & Shamsudin, 2019). Hotel need to make sure that they treat their customer by focusing more valued added. High benefits of cost will lead to meeting customer expectations but other than that means customer will not stay longer in the customer cycle (Sallaudin Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019). Focusing on the added value especially to the repeat customer may enhance the relationship between customer and hotel. Customer would like to be appreciated and they liked to be treat as important. As a result, they will continuous coming back and spend more to the hotels (Hamzah, Othman, & Hassan, 2016).

Recent research also indicates that satisfied customer actually contributed more to the service providers. Customer will willingly spread their positive experiences to their networking. Today, customer is not only used the word of mouth in order to share their experiences (Thiruvattal, 2017), but they used internet based social media that can reach unlimited numbers of people. Customer would like to upload photos, share live video and share their moments at the hotels that may

spread the positive brand image of the hotels and attract more to come (Abror et al., 2019; Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019; Thiruvattal, 2017).

Service recovery

This study is highlighting the measuring of service recovery actions towards the customer satisfaction and loyalty. The service recovery tool used in this study is RECOVSAT that have been introduced by (Santos, Hernandez, & Leão, 2019) based on disconfirmation theory introduced by (Berry, Zeithaml, & Parasuraman, 1985). There are five dimensions in the RECOVSAT namely atonement, communication, empowerment, apologies and feedback. All the dimensions have been tested by research in many service industries but limited research focused on the hotel industry. Service recovery according to (Berry, 2009) is very important towards relationship quality. Business organizations need to act fast when there are any service failures that may interrupted customer experiences (Mohd Farid Shamsudin & Razali, 2015). The fact that business organizations and customer need to understand is that service failure happens all the times. It is not something that service provider wishes it to occurs but things might just have happened not as per plan (Toufani, Stanton, & Chikweche, 2017). Hotel, in this case need to designed their step of actions to be implements in their action of counteracting g the service failure.

One of the important elements that customer is looking forward for service failures is the compensations. Hotels need to somehow configures something that can be compensate customer due to service failures. The compensations could be in terms of financial losses or similar anything that may related to it (Rosli & Nayan, 2020). Hotels need to ensure that customer is satisfied with the way they handle the compensations and the most important is that it must be seen as fair to customer. Unfair treatments may lead to dissatisfaction and frustration which will lead to negative word of mouth and smear the positive brand image.

Past researches (Phan & Ghantous, 2013; Samen, Akroush, & Abu-Lail, 2013) highlighted the role of communication in keeping the customer calm and accepting the service failure in a positive manner. According to (Akinici & Aksoy, 2019; Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019), hotels must make a clear communication to all customers related to the service failures. The communication according to (Salem, Shawtari, Shamsudin, & Hussain, 2016) must be given in a polite way so that customer is comfortable and easy to accept the reason and explanations of the service failure. It was also suggested that the employee who handle the customer must use adaptive method and empathy of the current customer state of situations.

Communication made between employee and customer is actually representing the business organizations (Hasim, Shamsudin, Ali, & Shabi, 2018). Employee need to be grants some discretion to make decision making based on the current situations of customer. (M. F. Shamsudin, Shabi, & Salem, 2018) claimed that customer wish to be handle by a single person whenever they faced difficulty. The fact is none of customer would like to be keep on hold and waiting for longer time while waiting for the matters to be processed or pending decision from the managers. Based on that, many researchers (Tabrani et al., 2018) suggested that employee need to be empowered in handling customer complaints and service failure.

Larsson and Broström (2019) suggested that service providers to seek for apology from customer due to the service failure. Most of the times, service failure could not occur due to the hotels or employees but seeking for apology would reduce the customers' stress and may bring him back to the normal situation and accepting the situation (Suhartanto, Gan, Sarah, & Setiawan, 2019). It was also recommended that the hotel to seek apology not only for the service failure but the

consequences occurred due to that such as financial losses, time, miss opportunities and many more. It was also reported that apology is one of the best approach to calm the customer from getting angry.

Besides that, hotel also need to seek feedback from customer on their experiences. The feedback could be used by the management in measuring the customer satisfaction in experiencing the service failure and service recovery (Ruzanna, Baharin, & Nayan, 2020). It is important to know how customer think about the process taken by the hotels and that could help them to improve further in their operational and services to customer.

III. Methodology

This study is used a quantitative method thus it uses a questionnaire survey form to collect data from respondents. This study used a convenience sampling technique where data were collected and administered by the respondents who visited the selected hotel during specific time at various days in a month that being selected. Altogether the data collections took 10 days to complete. The process of data collections started when target respondents were approached politely followed by explanation of the purposes of the study. Participations was on voluntary basis. Data collections occurred at 10 major hotels as recommended by the Tripadvisor.com, one of the popular travelling BlogSpot that provide information's related to tourism. Respondents were approached after they have completed their checkout process. Prior to that the manager in charge of the selected hotels has been approached and seek permission for the data collections exercises.

Questionnaire was written in English as most of the hotels' guest is believed to have proficient in the language. All items were adapted from past research and some minor corrections were done based on recommendations from selected subject matter experts appointed to verify the items asked. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 145 were returned (48 percent response rate). Data analysis were done using the structural equation modelling and results is as per discussed in the following topic.

IV. Results

In this study, the discriminant validity was also assessed. According to Hair et al. (2010), the square root of the AVE value for each structure should be larger than the shared relationship coefficients to establish the discriminant validity of the factors in the model. AVE for all constructs is within the range of 0.88 to 0.92 while CR is within the range 0.89 to 0.93. All results indicate positive and within the minimum acceptance values.

Table 1: Overall reliability of the constructs and factors loadings of indications

Items	Factor loading	t-value	MSV	ASV	AVE	CR
Service Recovery						
BE1	0.81	18.50	0.71	0.59	0.87	0.89
BE2	0.87	18.24				
BE3	0.90	22.09				
BE4	0.85	18.35				
BE5	0.83	18.87				
Customer satisfaction						
CS1	0.85	18.90	0.73	0.64	0.89	0.92

CS2	0.86	18.21				
CS3	0.92	21.78				
CS4	0.87	18.46				
CS5	0.89	18.77				
Customer loyalty						
CL1	0.91	21.57	0.76	0.61	0.85	0.87
CL2	0.90	21.11				
CL3	0.85	18.65				
CL4	0.74	16.68				

Table 2 confirmed the discriminant validity. These results also demonstrated that all measures were reliable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Means, standard deviations and correlations of latent variables are presented in Table 2. The results in Table 2 indicate that all correlations are significant.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and correlations of study constructs

	Mean	SD	Service recovery	Customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty
Service recovery	4.20	0.72	(0.91)		
Customer satisfaction	4.15	0.81	0.85	(0.93)	
Customer loyalty	4.50	0.79	0.60	0.77	(0.84)

Table 3: Path estimates of structural models

Hypothesis	Standardized path coefficients	t-values	Result
H1 Service recovery → Customer satisfaction	0.69	12.37	Supported
H2 Service recovery → Customer loyalty	0.15	4.58	Supported
H3 Customer satisfaction → Customer loyalty	0.31	7.29	Supported

In the present study, the hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling. Therefore, the fit indices values of the appropriate model, the values for path estimates are shown in Table 3. Service recovery influences customer satisfaction positively ($\beta = 0.69$ $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Further, service recovery influences customer loyalty positively

($\beta = 0.15$ $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H2. At the same time, customer satisfaction was found to have a positive influence over customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.31$ $p < 0.001$), therefore H3 is accepted.

Table 4: Path estimates of structural models

	Standardized path coefficients value			
	Full mediation model		Partial mediation model	
	β	<i>t</i> -value	β	<i>t</i> -value
Service recovery → Customer loyalty			0.15	4.58
Service recovery → Customer satisfaction	0.71	14.40	0.69	12.37
Customer satisfaction → Customer loyalty	0.29	6.70	0.31	7.29

According to partial mediation model, service recovery towards customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.69$ $p < 0.001$) and customer satisfaction predicted customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.31$ $p < 0.001$). These results show that although indirect effect of service recovery on customer loyalty through mediation was 0.21 ($\beta = 0.69 \times 0.31 = 0.07$ $p < 0.001$), the direct effect of service recovery on customer loyalty was 0.15. The direct effect of service recovery on customer loyalty was 0.15 ($p < 0.01$). The indirect effect is stronger than direct effect. Therefore, fully supported.

V. Discussion and conclusions

The results indicate that service recovery and customer satisfaction play an important role towards customer loyalty. The results also supported a few findings' recently on the service recovery that service recovery influences customer satisfaction (Mohd-Any, Mutum, Ghazali, & Mohamed-Zulkifli, 2019; Reis, Amorim, & Melão, 2019) and mediate the relationship between service recovery towards customer loyalty (Jung & Seock, 2017; Santos et al., 2019). The results also indirectly explain the current customer journey where service provider must ensure that customer is satisfied in order to become loyalty.

Service provider should be prepared to handle service failures as staff need to be informed and trains on how to handle such situation. Staff empowerment for example cannot be practiced on sudden but must be practised regularly so that it become culture blended with responsibility towards customer satisfaction.

Service provider must understand that customer who faced through the negative experiences will got frustrated not only because of the service failure but due to the poor coordination in the service recovery. Management should have focused more on the service recovery although some may though that it is very seldom to occurs and most of the time is isolate cases. A good customer oriented service provider will continue to enhance their services and regularly improvised their standard of services in order to c=become the best among the industry.

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