

THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL PENETRATION THEORY
ON SERVICE RECOVERY SATISFACTION IN A
RESTAURANT
SETTING

by

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ABSTRACT

The highly sociable nature of a restaurant is governed by successful customer communication. Effective communication with customers can not only promote customer satisfaction, but can also elicit relationships with customers, bringing them back into the restaurant. This study investigates the drivers of a long-lasting, reliable relationship between servers and customers, and how a customer's prior experience influences customer satisfaction. The study focuses on maintaining customer satisfaction in the event of a service failure. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of server disclosure on customer disclosure, as well as the impact of prior experience on customer disclosure. Also, the study investigates the influence of server disclosure on customer satisfaction of service recovery, and the influence of prior experience on customer satisfaction of service recovery.

A questionnaire was used to collect data for the full study. The questionnaire was developed in Qualtrics, an online survey website, and was distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online survey distribution database. The questionnaire was developed using validated measurement items to test each of the constructs of the study: server disclosure, prior experience, customer disclosure-willingness of providing feedback, customer disclosure-willingness of providing personal feelings, and customer satisfaction of service recovery. The questionnaire was used to collect data which was interpreted using MANOVA. The results indicated a significant relationship among all variables. The strongest influence of customer satisfaction of service recovery was server disclosure.

Minimal research has applied the Social Penetration Theory to a restaurant setting to evaluate relationships with customers. Few studies have examined the way server disclosure and customer disclosure effect the relationship between front-line employees and customers in a restaurant setting. There is also little research existing in the literature which examines the way the relationship built by server disclosure and customer disclosure effects the outcomes of service recovery. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no research exists which examines the roles of server disclosure, customer disclosure, and customer satisfaction of service recovery, based on the difference between first-time and repeat restaurant customers.

Keywords: Social Penetration Theory, Server disclosure, Customer disclosure, Prior Experience, Satisfaction of Service Recovery

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my committee members, faculty members, colleagues, family, and friends who offered devoted encouragement during the process of writing this manuscript. The patronage and collaboration of my committee members provided constant support for which I am incredibly honored and grateful. With their support, I was able to successfully navigate through the processes of composing a thesis while enjoying every step of the journey. Words cannot express the gratitude that I have for each member of my support system for their care during this thesis conception. The thesis is also dedicated to the hospitality industry's literature, in hopes that this contribution can assist in the future managerial success of restaurants – my beloved career of almost two decades.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Service is the principal product of the hospitality industry. The interaction, communication, and relationship between front-line employees and customers is crucial for success in the industry (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990; Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Hwang, Kim, & Hyun, 2013). The leading role of service providers is the establishment of a positive relationship with customers (Chen, Shi, & Dong, 2008; Susskind, Kacmar, & Borchgrevink, 2018). In a restaurant setting, the successful functioning of a relationship between servers and customers sets the tone for the overall service experience (Crosby et al., 1990; Susskind et al., 2018). The server is the restaurant's primary source of communication with customers, making the server's performance critical in the formation of long-term customer relationships (Hwang, Han, & Kim, 2015; Chen & Kim, 2019; Teng & Chang, 2013). Research has proven that maintaining existing customer relationships will cost a company significantly less money than creating relationships with new customers (Crosby et al., 1990; Hwang et al., 2013; Oh, 2002; Andreassen, 2000). Hwang et al. (2015) claim that it can be as much as five times more costly for a restaurant to attract a new customer than it is to keep current customers coming back. Moreover, customers with a committed relationship to a restaurant tend to be more willing to spend larger amounts of money than customers without established relationships (Hwang et al., 2013). These customers are also less likely to switch to competing restaurants – even when competitors offer incentives to do so (Hwang et al., 2013).

In 1973, behavioral psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmis Taylor developed the Social Penetration Theory (SPT) to expound how communication helps to develop interpersonal relationships. Altman and Taylor (1973) found that successful communication between two parties is key for relationship development and requires both parties to participate in the communication. The psychologists coined this two-way communication mutual disclosure. In the hospitality industry, mutual disclosure is split into two categories: server disclosure and customer disclosure (Hwang et al., 2015). Server disclosure is defined as the server's revealing of useful information to the customer, and customer disclosure is defined as the customer's revealing of personal perspectives, opinions, or expectations to the server (Hwang et al., 2015). Many studies have been conducted to discover the drivers of company-customer relationships and the factors that make the relationships last over time (Crosby et al., 1990; Chen et al., 2008; Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015; Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2009). Service failure was found to have detrimental effects on the company-customer relationship in the service industry (Andreassen, 2000; Crosby et al., 1990; Wu, Qomariyah, Nguyen, & Liao, 2018).

The highly sociable nature of the hospitality industry prescribes that occasions of service failure are inevitable (Chen & Kim, 2019; Kim et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2018). Customer dissatisfaction is most commonly reached following an encounter of poor communication, poor service quality or total service failure (Andreassen, 2000; Xu & Li, 2016). Andreassen (2000) defines service recovery as the service provider's responses and reactions to customer dissatisfaction. The author claims that in order for customer satisfaction to be reached all the time, it is essential for a service provider to effectively perform service recovery processes during occasions of customer dissatisfaction. Typically, a dissatisfied customer's first reaction will be to voice a complaint to the front-line employee, and then to evaluate the employee's

response to the complaint (Andreassen, 2000). It is imperative for that employee to genuinely listen to the customer's complaint, clearly explain any miscommunication or confusion, acknowledge and promptly resolve mistakes made in the service (Andreassen, 2000; Xu & Li, 2016). A two-way communication between service providers and customers has been proven to help front-line employees provide a more sincere and effective customer service experience (Hwang et al., 2015; Wen & Kwon, 2017). It has also been proven that effective server communication will help customers perceive the server as reliable, which will influence not only customers' perception of service, but also their level of commitment to the restaurant (Hwang et al., 2013; Wen & Kwon, 2017). Moreover, a comfortable and committed company-customer relationship has been shown to be beneficial for customer satisfaction of service recovery (Andreassen, 2000; Sahu & Das, 2018). Furthermore, Severt, Tesone and Murrmann (2005) explain that a customer's prior experiences will influence their expectancies for an employee's overall performance. Severt et al. (2005) posit that a customer's prior experience will also influence their apprehensions, anticipations, and evaluations of service recovery procedures and the outcomes. In accordance with these perspectives, it is important to investigate the predictors of communication between servers and customers and how this communication can uphold a committed relationship between service providers and customers – especially during and after service recovery procedures.

Previous studies (Chen et al., 2008; Hwang et al., 2015; Oh, 2002; Sahu & Das, 2018), have investigated the drivers which form mutually beneficial relationships between service industry providers and customers in order to understand what company practices can make these relationships stronger and lasting over time. However, little research has been conducted to examine the way server disclosure and customer disclosure effect the relationship between front-

line employees and customers in a restaurant setting. There is also minimal research existing in the literature which examines the way the relationship built by server disclosure and customer disclosure effects the outcomes of service recovery satisfaction. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies which examine the roles of server disclosure, customer disclosure, and customer's satisfaction of service recovery based on the difference between first-time and repeat restaurant customers. This study will evaluate how the server-customer relationship formed by two-way communication and prior experience will influence customer satisfaction of service recovery in a restaurant setting.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of server disclosure on customer disclosure, as well as the impact of prior experience on customer disclosure. Also, the study will investigate the influence of server disclosure on customer satisfaction of service recovery and the influence of prior experience on customer satisfaction of service recovery. To assess the constructs of server disclosure, prior experience, customer disclosure, and customer satisfaction of service recovery, this study uses Altman and Taylor's (1973) Social Penetration Theory (SPT) as the theoretical framework by adapting it to a restaurant setting. The results could be useful for restaurant managers and front-line employees when deliberating on how to generate customer satisfaction with service recovery procedures. Understanding what influences customer satisfaction of service recovery can possibly produce heightened customer satisfaction of a restaurant experience, and a more enduring company-customer relationship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspective

This study uses the SPT as the theoretical framework to guide the investigation. By way of the SPT, Altman and Taylor (1973) explain how the exchange of disclosure between two parties reveals personal drivers, intentions, and beliefs, and helps to create a dedicated and trusting relationship between the two parties. The theory states that individuals consider the relational rewards and costs with others (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Tang & Wang, 2012). Individuals measure interactional levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction while communicating with others in order to determine the advancement of a relationship, based on their calculations (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019). In a social setting, people often attempt to predict if their disclosure will be perceived as positive or negative, how the other party will respond, and to what degree the disclosure and response interaction will affect the relationship (Baack, Fogliasso, & Harris, 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012). When determining the outcomes of disclosure, rewards are often ascribed to positive reactions such as worth, importance, and benefit, while costs are often ascribed to negative reactions such as avoidance, unkindness, or harm (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019). The more likely the response will be positive, the more likely a person will feel confident to engage in disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). Likewise, the more likely the response will be negative, the more vulnerability will be felt in disclosing, which may or may not completely silence the disclosure (Baack et al., 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012).

Onion analogy

The SPT often uses the analogy of an onion to illustrate the different layers of disclosure and the extent to which people are willing to disclose in different social situations (Altman & Taylor, 1973). The onion analogy is used because of the vegetable's peelable layers. In the SPT, the outer layer of the onion is regarded as the superficial layer wherein lies "small talk," with items disclosed such as age, gender, occupation, etc. (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Osatuyi, Passerini, Ravarini, & Grandhi, 2018). According to the SPT, once past the outer layer, disclosure of more intimate viewpoints is revealed (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Tang & Wang, 2012). The next layer incorporates even more personal information and thus, the layers go deeper all the way down to the core characteristics, thoughts, or values which individuals feel are the most fundamental and private about their personality (Baack et al., 2000; Osatuyi et al., 2018). Tang and Wang (2012) explain that the categorization of these layers can vary per individual and that the collective layers form the overall personality of each individual. Tang and Wang (2012) also explain that while the superficial layers are usually disclosed readily, the closer the layers are to an individual's core characteristics, the more risky or vulnerable the disclosure feels, and therefore not readily disclosed to people for whom there is not an established personal relationship. Research has shown that the more disclosure occurs over time, the more people are willing to expose their deeper and more reserved or privileged beliefs (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Osatuyi et al., 2018; Tang & Wang, 2012). Additionally, as disclosure occurs over time, a relationship is built between the two parties and this relationship is strengthened as more layers are peeled back (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Tang & Wang, 2012). Baack et al. (2000) explain that these relationships become stronger as individuals feel increasing levels of comfort in revealing more intimate information to one another. Furthermore, studies have shown that individuals are

usually inclined to share more information as the relationship builds and, in order to maintain their relationships, individuals permit further penetration into deeper layers of disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Osatuyi et al., 2018). This is especially true when both parties find the relationship to be mutually beneficial (Baack et al., 2000).

Breadth and depth

Baack et al. (2000) explain that when studying the SPT, it is important to consider the breadth categories attributed to an individual's personality characteristics. Breadth categories (i.e. "work," "religion," "politics," and even "right" or "wrong"), are influenced by fluctuating breadth frequencies of an individual – meaning that an individual's breadth categories have different levels of significance during different interactions and occasions (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). For example, Baack et al. (2000) explain that an individual may find the topic of "religion" to be more important than the topic of "politics" in their general beliefs, but the significance of "religion" or "politics" may change when the individual is in different situations. Certain breadth categories also have different layers of depth to them, which refers to how deep the breadth category is in one's onion (Baack et al., 2000; Osatuyi et al., 2018). The deeper core personality characteristics and beliefs are typically only revealed to a select few, while outer layer characteristics and categories tend to be revealed to others at higher frequencies (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). Baack et al. (2000) argue that one reason for this is that the revelation of an individual's core personality characteristics tends to be less socially accepted which can stimulate feelings of vulnerability (Baack et al., 2000). Hwang et al. (2015) explain that during an interaction and in expectations of future interactions, both parties calculate rewards against the cost of disclosing core beliefs and personal feelings about a situation. In

other words, when the rewards are deemed to be higher than the costs, individuals are more likely to disclose deeper breadth categories, and of course, the reverse is true (Baack et al., 2000). These interactions are categorized as either “minor issues” or “central life interests,” and each have their own breadth categories applied to them (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012). The values of interactions and breadth categories are also analyzed by the individual’s preconditioned perceptions and beliefs of the relationship between the two parties (Altman & Taylor, 1973). While calculating the relationship and risks of disclosing certain information, individuals consider which information disclosed would have only minor ramifications and which could penetrate to the core of their personality (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). Individuals will assess whether the risk of revealing deeper breadth categories is worth disclosing according to the relationship and the situation (Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019; Osatuyi et al., 2018). If individuals decide the rewards and benefits are worth the risk of disclosing more personal perspectives, they will find value in disclosing categories closer to the core (Baack et al., 2000; Osatuyi et al., 2018). When interactions activate feelings or beliefs of an individual’s core characteristics in a negative way, they are perceived as a “crisis” and the individual is more likely to feel vulnerable, thus choosing not to participate in the disclosure relationship (Baack et al., 2000). Likewise, when interactions activate core characteristics in a positive way, they are perceived as emotions such as “joy,” and individuals could even become excited to participate in the disclosure (Baack et al., 2000).

Applying the SPT to the service industry

The principles of the SPT are used in the hospitality industry’s research to demonstrate how the mutual disclosure between service providers and customers is imperative for the formation of a reliable and long-term relationship (Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015; Kim

et al., 2009). In a restaurant setting, it has been shown that a long-term disclosure relationship will help servers to regularly identify customer expectations allowing them to more efficiently satisfy actual customer needs (Chen et al., 2008; Susskind et al., 2018). Kang and Hyun (2012) found that the disclosure relationship is made possible by one side initiating the self-disclosure, which encourages the other party to reciprocate disclosure, thus creating a more comprehensive communication. Server disclosure can therefore elicit the customer's disclosure of vital information which the server can use to provide adequate service (Hwang et al., 2015; Kang & Hyun, 2012). Hwang et al. (2013) suggest that it is important for servers to initiate the disclosure relationship in order to create a comfortable atmosphere of communication, such that the customer is more willing to disclose more personal expectations and/or needs. The SPT explains that when self-disclosure is repeated overtime individuals are more likely to disclose more personal motives, desires, thoughts and expectations (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Tang & Wang, 2012). If servers can initiate and maintain this level of comfortable communication, customers are more likely to disclose genuine food preferences, opinions, and complaints with their server (Kang & Hyun, 2012; Hwang et al., 2013, Hwang et al., 2015). Hwang et al. (2013) posit that mutual disclosure between servers and customers can result in amicable feelings between both parties helping to build long-lasting relationships. This means that the customer will be more likely to return with the intention of maintaining the relationship with the server (Hwang et al., 2013; Susskind et al., 2018). However, the unreciprocated disclosure on either the server or customer's side can result in relationship failures – which means the customer could be less inclined to return with the intentions of maintaining the relationship with the server (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Hwang et al., 2013).

This study will use the SPT as the theoretical framework to explore the social interactional relationship between restaurant servers and customers in order to evaluate how information disclosed by the server and the customer will affect the relationship. The study will examine the relationship of mutual disclosure and its influence on customer communication and satisfaction. Furthermore, the study will use the SPT to evaluate how this interaction influences customer satisfaction of service recovery in a restaurant setting. When used in service industry literature, the SPT's mutual disclosure construct is divided into two: server disclosure and customer disclosure (Hwang et al., 2015).

Server Disclosure

According to Altman and Taylor (1973), mutual disclosure creates a meaningful and comfortable relationship between two parties and is key to reducing uncertainty while communicating important information to individuals. Self-disclosure refers to the thoughts, perceptions and expectations that individuals voluntarily reveal to others and is key in maintaining personal relationships (Gibson, 2018; Tang & Wang, 2012). Hwang et al. (2015) claim to have conducted the first study using the SPT's mutual disclosure principles in the hospitality industry. In their study, server disclosure is defined as the server's revealing of helpful information and opinions about the menu and/or restaurant which is not already known by the customers (Hwang et al., 2015). When servers disclose menu suggestions regarding flavor, portion size, or pricing, customers are more likely to reciprocate by sharing their personal tastes with the server (Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015). Furthermore, Kang and Hyun (2012) found that when servers disclose not only honest information and opinions about the menu, but also personal background information and advices (i.e. knowing about a good gas station, mechanic, doctor, etc.), the customer perceives the server feels comfortable enough to

disclose this type of information, and in turn, they too become more likely to reciprocate more personal disclosure to the server. The more information servers disclose to customers, the more likely customers are to reveal truer needs, expectations, evaluations and concerns about the food quality and service quality to the server (Kang & Hyun, 2012; Hwang et al., 2015).

Research has demonstrated that in the service industry the performance of front-line employees has the most influence on customer's perception and future behavioral intentions (Crosby et al., 1990; Hwang et al., 2015; Kim & Ok, 2010). In a restaurant setting, the customer's perceived food and service quality are substantially influenced by a total evaluation of a server's technical skills, communication skills, professional knowledge, friendliness, and genuine efforts (Alhelalat, Habiballah, & Twaissi, 2017; Hwang et al., 2013; Kim & Ok, 2010). Specifically, a customer's perceived service quality is formed as a result of weighing customer service expectations to the performance of the server (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2009). Therefore, from the first introduction the server's technical and communication skills are evaluated and the more skillful the server is at his or her performance, the more confident the customer will be in that server (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Baker, Murrmann, & Green, 2013). Hwang et al. (2013) posit that server expertise induces a high level of server disclosure as expertise empowers servers to communicate information confidently and efficiently. Execution of these communication skills can make customers feel more confident in their server and in return they will feel more comfortable expressing their genuine needs and evaluations to the server (Hwang et al., 2015). Although not every customer will seek out a personal connection or relationship with the server, these customers still expect a positive interaction with their server (Kim & Ok, 2010). Therefore, a server's communication skills have a direct impact on the customer's perception of the service (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Kang & Hyun, 2012). Lo, Im, Chen, & Qu

(2017) found that intangible service qualities such as communication, can be more important to customer satisfaction than tangible attributes such as food quality, décor, atmosphere, etc.

Likability and confidence of the server will also help the customer feel more comfortable to ask important questions and reveal genuine expectations and needs (Hwang et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2009; Kim & Ok, 2010).

Hwang et al. (2013) suggest that perceived server attributes and perceived service quality are antecedents to both server and customer disclosure. Hwang et al. (2013) use likability as an antecedent of customer disclosure because smiling and likeable servers provide friendly and caring service, which will help the customer feel more comfortable to ask honest questions and request genuine needs. Hwang et al. (2015) support the SPT's assertion that continued mutual disclosure will help to create more comfortable relationships between servers and customers. The authors use this assertion to emphasize how server disclosure is key to reducing customer uncertainty when servers are communicating important information about the menu and throughout the dining experience (Hwang et al., 2015). Research shows that server disclosure induces customer disclosure, and that this disclosure relationship can not only positively affect customer perceptions, but also help restaurant employees understand how to successfully engage with customers on a social level (Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015; Kang & Hyun, 2012).

Based upon this literature, the following hypothesis was made:

H1: Server disclosure will have a significant influence on customer disclosure.

Customer Disclosure

Hwang et al. (2015) define customer disclosure as the customer's revelation of information about themselves including personal opinions, perspectives, expectations, and needs to the server. By genuinely listening to the customer's disclosure, the server can help the

customer feel valuable and more confident in the service (Kim & Ok, 2010; Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015). Customer disclosure is the customer's opportunity to express their true preferences and needs to the server, which facilitates elevated service (Kim & Ok, 2010; Hwang et al. 2015; Schuckert, Liang, Law, & Sun, 2019). Moreover, when a customer discloses to their server it is the restaurant's opportunity to hear a direct report of customer needs and feedback (Kim & Ok, 2010; Hwang et al., 2015; Schuckert et al., 2019). Hwang et al. (2015) explain that customer feedback can also help a server personalize the service to accommodate individual needs and preferences (i.e. food tastes, dietary restrictions, allergies, etc.).

A genuine two-way communication will help servers accommodate the customer's true preferences and obtain frank customer opinions (Hwang et al., 2013; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Schuckert et al., 2019). Baack et al. (2000) explain that mutual disclosure begins with one party initiating the disclosure and providing enough information for the other party to feel inclined to participate by returning disclosure. Typically, the more comfortable each party feels in disclosing, the more information will be shared (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Hwang et al., 2015). When the disclosure is reciprocated comfort levels increase allowing more personal insight and information to be revealed (Baack et al., 2000; Schuckert et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2013). In a social setting, people often attempt to determine the level of risk the disclosure has on the relationship (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). The higher the risk the more susceptible to avoidance of disclosure people will be however, the higher the benefits the more people will disclose (Altman & Taylor 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012). Hwang et al. (2013) found that server disclosure is the main antecedent for customer disclosure. Lo et al. (2017) explain that customers often feel uncomfortable disclosing to the server but still expect a high level of service and thorough server communication. With

effective execution of server disclosure, channels of customer disclosure are opened providing valuable information to the server that will elevate levels of service (Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015; Lo et al., 2017). By allowing for a safe channel of customer disclosure, servers can help the customer feel like they are important, thereby recognizing their authentic and individual preferences and concerns (Lo et al., 2017; Schuckert et al., 2019). Kim and Ok (2010) found that when customers can actively participate in their service experience by way of customer disclosure they feel empowered in the service exchange and, therefore, are more likely to receive more individualized and genuine needs. It is also very important that servers respond quickly and effectively each time the customer discloses in order to ensure that the communication will continue over time (Baack et al., 2000; Schuckert et al., 2019). Conversely, an unbalanced or unreciprocating server disclosure to customer communication will not allow a solid relationship to be established between the server and the customer (Hwang et al., 2013). Therefore, servers must actively listen to customer disclosure (Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015).

Kang and Hyun (2012) explain that customer-oriented servers are perceived to take the appropriate actions to accommodate the customer. Customer orientation refers to the customer's perception that the server genuinely cares about his or her overall experience (Gerlach, Rodiger, Stock, & Zacharias, 2016; Hwang et al., 2013). Moreover, customer-oriented servers are perceived by the customer as having the ability to truly comprehend and understand customer needs, expectations, and complaints (Gerlach et al., 2016; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Hwang et al., 2013). In this way, customer-oriented employees create a comfortable communication atmosphere, allowing a customer to feel free to share their complaints, true feelings, and/or concerns (Gerlach et al., 2016; Kang & Hyun, 2012). These employees also enhance enjoyable interactions and personal connections with customers, penetrating the levels of customer

disclosure and laying the foundation for a lasting relationship (Gerlach et al., 2016; Hwang et al., 2013).

Customer disclosure will allow the server to fully recognize customer needs by continuously improving service quality and overall customer satisfaction (Hwang et al., 2015; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Kim & Ok, 2010). As the disclosure relationship continues to build, servers develop a deeper understanding of what is important to customers in their dining experiences (Hwang et al. 2013; Im & Qu, 2017; Kim & Ham, 2016). Not only can customer disclosure give the server and the restaurant clues or information about preferences in food tastes, atmosphere, and service experiences, but customer disclosure can also provide information about what is important to customers on a personal level (Im & Qu, 2017; Kim & Ham, 2016). Whether it is sustainability, nutritional information, the restaurant's reputation or community impact; if customers disclose these deeper categories of concerns and preferences, the server can accommodate these individualized needs more sufficiently (Im & Qu, 2017; Kim & Ham, 2016; Lo et al., 2017). For example, Kim and Ham (2016) explain that customers are becoming more dedicated to eating healthier while dining out, thereby becoming more concerned with the nutritional information of a restaurant's offerings. When servers become aware of these customer concerns, servers can provide customers with the information they seek and make menu suggestions accordingly (Im & Qu, 2017; Kim & Ham, 2016; Wen & Kwon, 2017). As another example, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability practices have recently become a common concern for customers (Im & Qu, 2017; Kim & Ham, 2016). These CSR concerns include safe environmental practices, sound treatment of employees, and community engagement, which employees can demonstrate to customers during their performance of restaurant procedures (Kim & Ham, 2016). Furthermore, Kim and Ham (2016) found that when

restaurants recognize nutritional and sustainability concerns and address them by implementing proactive practices and procedures, restaurants are showing customers that they have acknowledged their concerns and are making efforts to accommodate them. Customers who are concerned with nutritious menu options and a restaurant's CSR and sustainability practices will most likely choose a restaurant that is willing to provide healthy options and perform sound social practices over other restaurants (Im & Qu, 2017; Kim & Ham, 2016; Wen & Kwon, 2017). Considering the finding that it is cheaper for a restaurant to maintain relationships with current customers than obtaining new ones (Crosby et al., 1990; Hwang et al., 2013; Oh, 2002), Kohlbeck (2011) explains that obtaining customer disclosure of this sort is crucial, as customers have ultimate buying power - especially in the restaurant industry. This means that a restaurant's success is dependent upon the formation of customer relationships (Crosby et al., 1990; Kohlbeck, 2011; Oh, 2002). As customers have buying power in the restaurant industry, customers can easily switch to other restaurants, hence it is extremely important for restaurants to receive extensive customer disclosure as it provides crucial information about how to establish and maintain customer relationships over a long period of time (Im & Qu, 2017; Kohlbeck, 2011). Combining the attributes of a server and restaurant services that are most valued by customers can help them feel that their relationship to the restaurant is mutually beneficial (Im & Qu, 2017; Kohlbeck, 2011).

Customer disclosure and rapport

According to the SPT, when mutual disclosure occurs over time people will begin to reveal more and more personal information to one another, and a long-term relationship between the two parties will begin to develop (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). In the restaurant setting, as mutual communication occurs effectively over time, rapport – or repeated

enjoyable customer interaction with the server – will help to establish a more enduring relationship (Hwang et al., 2013; Kaminakis, Karantinou, Koritos, & Gounaris, 2019). This long-term relationship will help the customer feel comfortable enough to frequently reveal more personal preferences to the server, thus allowing the server to develop a profound understanding about the customer's complex menu and service preferences (Hwang, et al., 2015; Kaminakis et al., 2019). This continued communication will allow the server to provide more efficient and memorable services, strengthening the positive relationship with the customer, and ensuring that the relationship will continue over time (Hwang et al., 2015; Kaminakis et al., 2019).

Furthermore, rapport formation is important between servers and customers as the rapport tends to elicit customer feelings of sincere gratitude and personal connections with the server (Hwang et al., 2015; Kaminakis et al., 2019). This connection can make the customer feel a responsibility to continue contributing to the relationship, meaning that the customer will return to the restaurant (Hwang et al., 2013). Effective communication between servers and customers has been found to be one of the most important antecedents for long-term relationships between service providers and customers (Kim et al., 2009; Hwang et al., 2013; Lo et al., 2017).

Satisfaction of Service Recovery

Research explains that the restaurant industry is one involving complex and high involvement services that can often lead to mistakes (Crosby et al., 1990; Delcourt, Gremler, De Zanet, & van Riel, 2017; Kim et al., 2009). These mistakes, or service failures, are inevitable and frequently happen during communication, order taking, food and delivery execution, and even payment processes (Crosby et al., 1990; Hwang et al., 2015; Oh, 2002) During service experiences when bad news is delivered to customers (i.e. forgot to ring in food, lack of menu item, serving cold or overcooked food, etc.), the way in which front-line employees honestly

handle and adjust to these situations highly affects the customer's perception of the overall service recovery (Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019; Guchait, Lee, Wang, & Abbott, 2016; Kim et al., 2009). Wu et al. (2018) define service recovery as customer's perceptions of the reactions, processes, and procedures that employees practice in order to return a dissatisfied customer to satisfaction. Kim et al. (2009) claim that the processes that a company and its employees practice during service recovery procedures can not only restore customer satisfaction but can also reinforce customer relationships. Wu et al. (2018) explain that employees must be able to understand and interpret the customer's reactions and expectations of the service during the recovery process. The SPT explains that a functioning disclosure relationship can help both parties more clearly understand the intentions and reactions of each other (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012). Thus, the server disclosure and customer disclosure relationship will facilitate successful communication during a service failure and enable servers and customers to understand the procedures and expectations that must be met in order to achieve satisfaction of service recovery (Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019; Oh, 2002).

The focus of a study conducted by Andreassen (2000) examined how customers tend to respond to a service failure, and what the typical customer expectations are during the recovery process. The study evaluated the reimbursement expectations of the customer, customer expectations of front-line employee's responses to the error, and what actions the customer needs the employees to make in order to feel that the error has been rectified (Andreassen, 2000). Customers might expect to be compensated for the service failure by such recompenses as coupons, discounts, bill reimbursement, or even product readjustment or substitution (Andreassen, 2000; Harrison-Walker, 2019). However, it was found that the intangible reactions of employees during the service recovery process can be more effective for customer satisfaction

of service recovery (Delcourt et al., 2017; Andreassen, 2000). Nonetheless, customer satisfaction of service recovery can create even stronger company-customer relationships than when a service failure did not occur (Kim et al., 2009; Guchait, Kim, & Roseman, 2014; Harrison-Walker, 2019; Silber, Israeli, Bustin, & Zvi, 2009). Conversely, poor employee responses during service recovery can result in customers completely switching providers (Kenesei & Kolos, 2018; Silber et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2018). Kim et al. (2009) show that customers who are dissatisfied with the service encounter typically react in one of four ways; exit silently, spread negative word-of-mouth, voice complaints to front-line employees, or continue to revisit despite dissatisfaction. The authors claim that the two most commonly performed behaviors of customers who experience service failure are exit and voice. According to Andreassen (2000) exit implies that the customer will completely stop purchasing the company's services, while voice is explained as customer complaints which express dissatisfaction directly to the front-line employees of a company. When the employee receives the customer complaint, the customer will then evaluate the employees' response behavior (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012; Tsai & Su, 2009; Wu et al., 2018). The way in which employees respond is therefore important to help customers feel more inclined to express dissatisfaction to them directly, rather than allow permanent damage to the company-customer relationship (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012; Wu et al., 2018).

An established disclosure relationship can help reduce customer uncertainty during the service failure, help the customer feel confident in the server's performance, and feel more comfortable expressing their genuine needs and assessments of the server during the recovery process (Baack et al., 2000; Hwang et al., 2013; Tsai & Su, 2009). Effective server disclosure can also help service providers clearly communicate care and purpose during the service

recovery process (Crosby et al., 1990; Hwang et al., 2015; Oh, 2002). Hwang et al. (2013) found that the overall customer evaluation of a service encounter is largely determined by the front-line employee's ability and efforts. Server performance and communication skills can be useful tools to help facilitate customer's willingness to express sincere frustrations, concerns, and expectations throughout the service recovery process (Andreassen, 2000; Gerlach et al., 2016; Karatepe & Karadas, 2012).

In-role and extra-role customer expectations of employee job performance are also important contributors in service recovery satisfaction (Andreassen, 2000; Kaminakis et al., 2019). The operational expectations and a minimal level of communication skills are automatically placed in the category of in-role expectations, but there are also some levels of both operational and communication practices that are viewed as extra-role job performances (Andreassen, 2000; Gerlach et al., 2016; Kaminakis et al., 2019). For example, menu knowledge and introductions are considered in-role categories of server performance, while servers who provide suiting menu recommendations and communicate levels of expertise in a likeable way fall into extra-role categories of service performance (Andreassen, 2000; Kaminakis et al., 2019; Tsaur, Wang, Yen, & Liu, 2014). Service recovery procedures often allow the server to display extra-role performances, such as excellent communication or disclosure skills, which can produce a level of delight in the customer and amplify satisfaction of service recovery (Andreassen, 2000; Delcourt et al., 2017; Guchait et al., 2014). However, if the in-role customer expectations are not reached, then the extra-role performances could be completely overlooked by the customer (Andreassen, 2000; Delcourt et al., 2017).

Delcourt et al. (2017) explain that when a service failure is encountered customers often experience negative emotions such as stress, confusion and resentment. When considering the

emotional reaction that customers can have during a service failure, Delcourt et al. (2017) suggest that customer-oriented employee behaviors such as positive emotional displays, confidence and genuine concern, can be extremely effective in tempering negative customer emotions. The authors explain that front-line employees must promptly recognize and effectively react to customer emotions during a service failure in order to prevent the dissatisfaction from being intensified. Furthermore, customers appraise the ability of the employee to perform both functional and benevolent behaviors which allow the customer to perceive that the service recovery was performed honorably and effectively (Delcourt et al., 2017; Kenesei & Kolos, 2018; Wu et al., 2018). Effective server communication during service recovery and the ability to address both the functional and benevolent expectations of the customer are important as customer emotions are first triggered by the service failure, and then influenced by the recovery process in a cyclical movement throughout the experience of error and recovery (Delcourt et al., 2017; Guchait et al., 2014). Customer disclosure of emotions provides employees with crucial information about what is most important to customers during recovery (Delcourt et al., 2017; Choi & Choi, 2014; Kim et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2018). Delcourt et al. (2017) found that during a service encounter it is important to normalize the emotional reactions a customer experiences during the service failure (i.e. stress, fear of monetary costs, frustration, anxiety, etc.), and to evaluate what actions can help the customer feel the input they contribute to a situation is balanced compared to the output that they receive. Thus, the customer will evaluate to what extent they feel their complaint has been handled fairly and that they received justifiable compensation (Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019; Choi & Choi, 2014; Kim et al., 2009). After evaluating the service recovery procedure, the customer will find that successful service recovery can create strong positive feelings such as delight; however, an unsuccessful recovery can create

strong negative feelings including anger (Andreassen, 2000; Delcourt et al., 2017; Guchait et al., 2014). Delcourt et al., (2017) explain that is important to consider that the resulting emotions of the customer's evaluation are possibly attributed to a halo effect, whereby complainers bring overall positive or negative biases to the current situation. Nonetheless, one of purposes of a customer's complaint is a reaction to negative emotions and an attempt to return to neutral emotions and a neutral situation (Andreassen, 2000; Choi & Choi, 2014; Delcourt, 2017). Therefore, it is important for a customer to disclose their genuine emotional reaction to the server in order for the server to effectively provide a satisfying service recovery experience (Andreassen, 2000; Choi & Choi, 2014; Delcourt et al., 2017).

Finally, it is important for customers to believe that servers are honest with them while discussing products and purchases, and this is especially important during a service recovery process (Guchait, Pasamehmetoglu, & Lanza-Abbott, 2015; Hwang et al., 2015, Oh, 2002). When the server disclosure and customer disclosure relationship is successfully established, a strong company-customer bond is formed (Hwang et al., 2013; Oh, 2002). This relationship can help assure the customer that a service provider truly cares and honors the feelings of the customer, helping service recovery satisfaction to be more easily and effectively be reached (Choi & Choi, 2014; Guchait et al., 2015; Oh, 2002; Wu et al., 2018). A lasting customer relationship is created by a restaurant when servers consistently participate in a two-way communication and perform competent and benevolent behaviors that demonstrate care and respect for the customer (Chaudhry & Loewenstein, 2019; Guchait et al., 2014; Oh, 2002). Furthermore, customers who are satisfied with a service recovery incident could potentially feel a higher level of overall satisfaction than customers who did not experience a service failure and

service recovery procedure (Andreassen, 2000; Choi & Choi, 2014; Kim et al., 2009). Based on the literature, the following hypothesis was formed:

H2: Server disclosure will have a significant influence on customer satisfaction of service recovery.

Based on the above literature review, the following framework was used in this study:

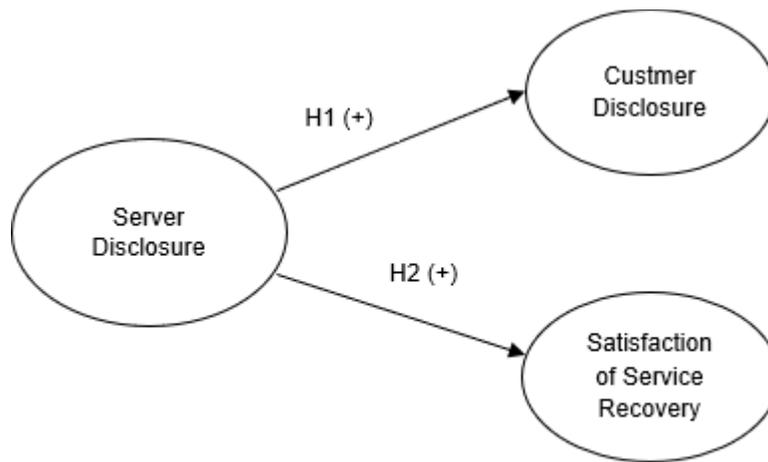


Figure 1: Hypothesized framework model

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study Method

In this chapter there will be a discussion of the methodology used for both the pilot study and the full study. Data analysis used to meet the study objectives will also be presented. The initial purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of server disclosure on customer disclosure as well as the influence of server disclosure on customer satisfaction of service recovery.

Since the constructs were adapted from previous studies that used different contexts, a pilot study was conducted to verify the measurement of the constructs when using the hypothesized framework in a restaurant setting. A questionnaire was created using validated measures of the constructs (server disclosure, customer disclosure, and customer satisfaction of service recovery). The survey questions were designed based on previous research. Following the structure of the measurement models used in the previous studies listed below, all measurements in this study utilized a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Server disclosure was measured by (4 items) adapted from Hwang et al. (2015), customer disclosure was measured by (7 items) adapted from Lo et al. (2017), and customer satisfaction of service recovery was measured by (6 items) that were adapted from Kim et al. (2009).

Qualtrics, an online survey platform, was utilized to create and distribute the questionnaire through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online survey distribution

database. MTurk was chosen as the survey distribution database based on the platform's reputation to recruit a sound representation of the population quickly and at a reasonable price (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). In the study conducted by Berinsky et al. (2012), MTurk was found to be both valid and reliable, however the questionnaire used in this study began with a qualifying question to be sure that participants were qualified to participate based on a recent service failure in a restaurant setting. The authors of this study chose to quantify "recent" in this context as "the past three months," because the authors agreed that this time frame was both distant enough in the past to incorporate a sufficient number of participants, and recent enough that participants would still have an adequate memory of their service failure experience. The survey begins with the qualifying question: "In the past three months, have you experienced a restaurant service failure (received the wrong food, cold food, rude server, etc.) for which an employee attempted to correct the problem?" If participants answered "no," they were directed to the end of the survey. If participants answered "yes," they were deemed qualified to participate in the survey. To test the constructs underlying variable, factor analysis was used as well as MANOVA to test the relationship among the constructs.

Table 1

Pilot Study Construct Measurements

Constructs and Measurement Items	References
<p>Server Disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The server acknowledges his/her mistake. • The server tells you about his/her honest opinion. • The server gives appropriate response while handling customer complaints. • The server provides reasonable solutions while handling customer complaints. 	Hwang et al. (2015)
<p>Customer Disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am willing to provide feedback about the restaurant's offerings. • I am willing to report the service error to the restaurant. • I am willing to express my feelings about the quality of service. • I am willing to provide my personal preference information to the server. • I do not like to share my personal experiences with the server. • I don't feel comfortable providing negative feedback to the server. • I express thanks to the server for his/her services. 	Lo et al. (2017)
<p>Service Recovery Satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, I am satisfied by the service I received. • I am satisfied with the manner in which service failure was resolved. • The server's response to the service failure was acceptable. • After the service recovery, I now have a more positive attitude toward the restaurant. • After the service recovery, I now have more positive attitude towards the server. • <u>I am satisfied with the way the server handled the situation.</u> 	Kim et al. (2009)

Pilot Study Results

A total of 161 questionnaires were collected and used for analysis of the pilot study. The majority of the participants were male (67%) and only 36% were females. The majority of participants (68%) dine in casual restaurants and 67% were between 25-34 years of age. The factor analysis indicated that the customer disclosure construct had two parts. One part was related to customers' willingness to provide feedback to the restaurant/server (e.g., "I am willing to provide feedback about the restaurant offerings). The other part was associated with customers' personal and negative feelings toward the server (e.g., "I don't feel comfortable providing negative feedback to the server"). Thus, four constructs (server disclosure, customers' willingness of providing feedback, customer disclosure of personal feelings, and customer satisfaction of service recovery) were included. The inter-item consistency (α) of all measurement items ranged from .72 to .88.

The results of MANOVA indicated that server disclosure had a significance on willingness of providing feedback ($F(1,146)=9.94, p<.01, \eta^2=.49$) and on customer satisfaction of service recovery ($F(1,146)=21.40, p<.01, \eta^2=.67$). However, server disclosure did not show a significant impact on customer disclosure of personal feelings ($p>.10$).

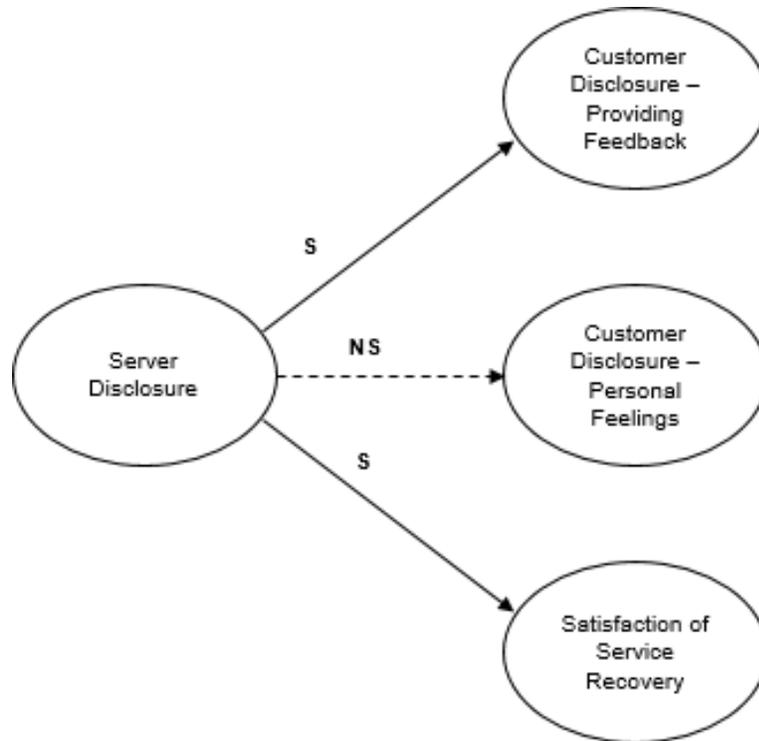


Figure 2: Pilot Study MANOVA results
 Note: S = significant; NS = not significant

Pilot Study Discussion

The pilot study investigated the social interaction between restaurant servers and customers as well as how server disclosure influences customers' satisfaction of service recovery. This study is different than previous studies in that it identifies two dimensions of customer disclosure: willingness of providing feedback and personal feelings about the service experience. Customers' personal feelings indicate a certain level of intimacy, which is not easily revealed or detected. However, server disclosure, or communicating with customers and providing solutions to handle complaints, can encourage customers to provide genuine feedback to the restaurant and/or the server. In addition, the results of this pilot study revealed that when a

server provides information and personal perspectives to customers, satisfaction of service recovery will increase.

Suggestions for the Full Study

Obtaining a larger sample size will more sufficiently evaluate the proposed framework. Since the customer disclosure construct split into two-parts, customers' willingness of providing feedback and customer disclosure of personal feelings, each should be separately measured in the full study order to evaluate the significance and effect of each new construct.

Furthermore, little research has been conducted to examine the difference between first-time and repeat customer's perceptions and reactions of server disclosure during a service recovery process. Previous research (Chen & Kim, 2019; Severt, 2002; Su & Swanson, 2017) has shown that prior experience – or the past relations between a customer and a service provider – has an impact on the customer's overall perception of service quality and future levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, prior experience has been shown to be an influence on customer's expectations and evaluations to service failures, as well as on the future relationship of customers and service providers (Chen & Kim, 2019; Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekar, 1998; Severt, 2002).

Full Study

Based on the results of the pilot study, the following section includes a literature review to support the inclusion of prior experience, followed by the full study's methodology.

Prior experience

The SPT explains that when disclosure occurs over time, people will feel more comfortable in revealing deeper levels of information to each other (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012). This might suggest that interactions would have to occur more than once. In the hospitality industry, prior experience explains how the past relations between a customer and a service provider form customer expectation based on their past experiences (Chen & Kim, 2019; Severt, 2002; Su & Swanson, 2017; Tax et al., 1998). Previous research (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Nugraha, Hamin, & Elliott, 2016; Tax et al., 1998; Severt, 2002) has shown that prior experience has a significant impact on the server and customer relationship as well as an effect on a customer's overall perceptions of service quality. Severt (2002) found that prior experience has a significant effect on the future expectations of a customer and the continuation of a relationship between the service provider and the customer. The SPT claims that disclosure is only possible when both parties feel comfortable enough to participate in disclosing and deeper levels of disclosure are revealed as communication continues over time (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Tang & Wang, 2012). Nugraha et al. (2016) explain that in high-involvement services, such as occur in restaurants, prior experience can act as a tool for reducing uncertainty. The authors claim that prior experience and an established company-customer relationship can help to assure customers that they are being treated fairly and equally during restaurant procedures. Therefore, this established relationship can be especially helpful in the case of service recovery procedures. Of course, customer

assurance will be amplified if the customer's prior experiences are all positive (Nugraha et al., 2016; Severt et al., 2005). Similarly, if the customer has experienced multiple negative encounters, there could be a complete lack of confidence in the restaurant's ability to perform well, especially during service recovery procedures (Nugraha et al., 2016; Severt et al., 2005).

Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) describe prior experience to be an accumulation of knowledge. Nugraha et al. (2016) call this "experiential learning," and explain that overtime individuals learn more details of people and places which will form a more comprehensive knowledge about a firm's staff and operations. Therefore, prior experience can influence customer perceptions and expectations of a server's performance (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Nugraha et al., 2016). Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) found that a positive collection of prior experiences can influence a customer's positive perceptions about a server and help customers develop more clear understanding about the purposes of the restaurant's procedures.

Severt et al. (2005) found that customers tend to continually renew or update their perceptions and expectations as they gain new experiences after each visit to the restaurant. Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) also explain that as customers form a collective perception about a service experience their perception can easily change after just one satisfying or dissatisfying incident. This could mean that even if the customer generally has a good perception of a restaurant due to satisfying prior experiences one negative service experience could damage all the good built by positive prior experiences (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Severt et al., 2005). Of course, the reverse of this scenario could also prove to be true. Therefore, it is important for a restaurant to know if customers continue to have positive experiences or begin to have negative experiences (Kim et al., 2009; Anderson, 2000; Severt et al., 2005).

Polo-Pena, Frias-Jamilena and Rodriguez-Molina (2013) found that when a customer is experiencing a restaurant for the first time, the functional performances of the server and restaurant are more closely evaluated by the customer than the benevolent performances. The authors also found that when a customer has prior experience with a restaurant the benevolent performances of front-line employees has more influence on the customer's perception of service than functional performances. Research has shown that customer satisfaction is a judgement formed by the perceptions of functional and benevolent employee performance, which will elicit functional and benevolent customer reactions (Delcourt et al., 2017; Polo-Pena et al., 2013; Teng & Chang, 2013; Tsaur et al., 2014). It was also found that first-time customers evaluate a restaurant by physical or tangible surroundings, but customers with prior experience will begin to place more importance on the evaluation of intangible experiences such as friendliness, social interaction and the overall mood of the restaurant (Polo-Pena et al., 2013; Teng & Chang, 2013).

Severt et al. (2005) advise that employees can gain lots of beneficial knowledge about customers based on their prior experience and their cumulative perceptions about a restaurant. Understanding exactly what the perceptions of customers are comes by way of customer disclosure (Hwang et al., 2013; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Kohlbeck, 2011). By receiving customer disclosure after each visit, servers can develop a better understanding of how customers evaluate each experience and what expectations they will most likely have for future interactions at the restaurant (Hwang et al., 2013; Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Kim & Ok, 2010; Severt, 2002). If a customer discloses that their prior experiences have been negative, the server can take initiative to be sure that another negative experience does not compound customer dissatisfaction (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Severt et al., 2005; Tax et al., 1998).

Prior experience has been proven to influence customers' expectations and evaluations of service failures, as well as the future relationship of customers and service providers after service recovery procedures (Chen & Kim, 2019; Tax, et al., 1998; Severt, 2002; Severt et al., 2005). As such, it is important for a server to establish strong disclosure relationships with customers in order to receive the customers' true perceptions and levels of satisfaction (Hwang et al., 2013; Kim & Ok, 2010; Schuckert et al., 2019). Prior experience can also enhance customer understanding and patience with service failures, allowing servers to use the established relationship as a tool during service recovery procedure (Chen & Kim, 2019; Oh, 2002; Palo-Pena, 2013; Tax et al., 1998).

As the above literature has demonstrated, prior experience has been proven to significantly impact the relationship between the service provider and the customer. It was proposed that prior experience with the restaurant can influence the success of server disclosure, the extent of customer disclosure, and levels of customer satisfaction of service recovery. Based upon the literature, two additional hypotheses were added to the full study. Measurements of prior experience were also added to the survey used in the full study with the following (4 items) adapted from Severt (2002): (1) "My past dealings with the organization left a positive impression;" (2) "My past dealings with the organization were negative;" (3) "My past dealings with the organization left me feeling satisfied;" (4) "My past dealings with the organization left me feeling dissatisfied." These items will be measured on the 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Full study methodologies

Based on the findings and recommendations of the pilot study, the full study hypotheses were expanded, and additional constructs were added. The new constructs are prior experience,

customer disclosure providing feedback, and customer disclosure of personal feelings. By combining the hypotheses used in the pilot study and the recommended additions, the following six hypotheses were formed to guide the full study:

H1: Server disclosure will have a significant influence on customer disclosure providing feedback.

H2: Server disclosure will have a significant influence on customer disclosure of personal feelings.

H3: Server disclosure will have a significant influence on customer satisfaction of service recovery.

H4: Prior experience will have a significant influence on customer disclosure providing feedback.

H5: Prior experience will have a significant influence on customer disclosure of personal feelings.

H6: Prior experience will have a significant influence on customer satisfaction of service recovery.

By using these hypotheses to guide the full study, the revised framework for the full study is as follows:

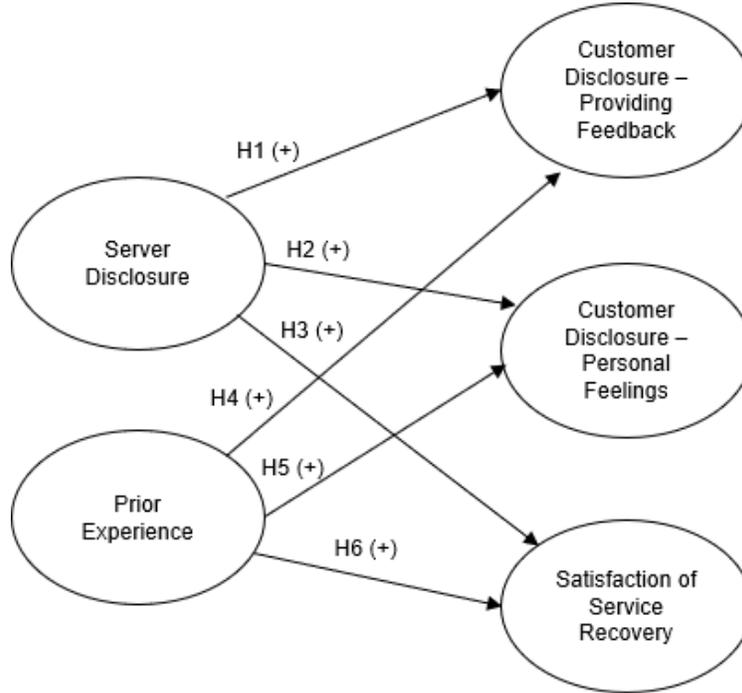


Figure 3: Hypothesized framework revised for full study

Data analysis was used to meet the initial purpose of this study; to investigate the impact of server disclosure on customer disclosure, as well as the influence of server disclosure on customer satisfaction of service recovery. The same questionnaire used in the pilot study was used to collect data for the full study with the addition of the prior experience measurements. As mentioned in the pilot study method, the questionnaire was developed in Qualtrics, an online survey website, and was distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online survey distribution database. The questionnaire was developed using validated measurement items to test each of the constructs of the full study (server disclosure, prior experience, customer disclosure–willingness of providing feedback, customer disclosure– personal feelings, and

customer satisfaction of service recovery). All measurements utilized a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The survey questions were designed based on previous research. Server disclosure was measured by (4 items) adapted from Hwang et al. (2015), prior experience was measured by (4 items) adapted from Severt (2002), customer disclosure – providing feedback was measured by (4 items) adapted from Lo et al. (2017), customer disclosure – personal feelings was measured by (3 items) adapted from Lo et al. (2017), and customer satisfaction of service recovery was measured by (6 items) that were adapted from Kim et al. (2009). All measurements were asked with a qualifying statement: “Based on your most recent service failure experience in the restaurant, please select the best choice regarding the following questions.” A MANOVA was conducted to test the relationship of the two independent variables’ influence on the three dependent variables.

Table 2

Full Study Construct Measurements

Constructs and measurement items	References
<p>Server Disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The server acknowledges his/her mistake. • The server tells you about his/her honest opinion. • The server gives appropriate response while handling customer complaints. • The server provides reasonable solutions while handling customer complaints. 	Hwang et al. (2015)
<p>Prior Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My past dealing with this restaurant left a positive impression. • My past dealing with this restaurant were negative. • My past dealing with this restaurant left me feeling satisfied. • My past dealing with this restaurant left me feeling dissatisfied. 	Severt (2002)
<p>Customer Disclosure – Providing Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am willing to provide feedback about the restaurant’s offerings. • I am willing to report the service failure to the restaurant. • I am willing to express my feelings about the quality of service. • I am willing to provide my personal preference information to the server. 	Lo et al. (2017)
<p>Customer Disclosure – Personal Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not like to share my personal experiences with the server. • I don’t feel comfortable providing negative feedback to the server. • I express thanks to the server for his/her services. 	Lo et al. (2017)
<p>Service Recovery Satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, I am satisfied by the service I received. • I am satisfied with the manner in which service failure was resolved. • The server’s response to the service failure was acceptable. • After the service recovery, I now have a more positive attitude toward the restaurant. • After the service recovery, I now have more positive attitude towards the server. • I am satisfied with the way the server handled the situation. 	Kim et al. (2009)

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Study results from the full study are presented in this chapter and were used to analyze the relationships of the study constructs (server disclosure, prior experience, customer disclosure–willingness of providing feedback, customer disclosure– personal feelings, and customer satisfaction of service recovery), and to test the hypotheses. The data collection for the full study followed the recommendations of the pilot study by increasing the sample size of the population, measuring both parts of customer disclosure, and adding measurements of prior experience.

Demographic Information

In total, there were 325 responses collected. After 29 invalid data were removed due to unqualified respondents or incomplete questionnaires, a total of 296 responses were retained and included in the data analysis. Therefore, the data collection of this full study included a total of 296 completed questionnaires by participants representing restaurant customers whom recently experienced a service failure. The survey respondents comprised of 97 females (32.7%) and 199 males (67%). The differences in gender proportion demonstrate a majority of males who have experienced a recent service failure while dining at a restaurant. The majority of the respondents (192 or 64.6%) were between 25 and 34 years of age. Most of the participants (186 or 62.6%) reported having a bachelor's degree (four years of college). Thirty-eight participants (12.8%) had a master's degree and 31 (10.4%) had some college but no degree. The largest group of participants (52 or 17.5%) made an annual income between \$20,000 and \$29,999. The majority

of participants (180 or 60.0%) claimed to visit the restaurant 1-2 times per week and 108 participants (36.4%) said they typically dined at casual dining–full service restaurants. Table 3 provides a summary of the demographic data for the full study.

Table 3
Characteristics of Respondents (N=296)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	199	67%
	Female	97	32.7%
Age	18-24	31	10.4%
	25-34	192	64.6%
	35-44	49	16.5%
	45-54	16	5.4%
	55-64	6	2.0%
	65-74	2	.7%
Education	1 = High School or Equivalent	19	6.4%
	2 = Some College but no Degree	31	10.4%
	3 = Associate Degree	18	6.1%
	4 = Bachelor's Degree	186	62.6%
	5 = Master's Degree	38	12.8%
	6 = Doctoral Degree	1	.3%
	7 = Professional Degree	3	1.0%
Income	1 = Less than \$10,000	26	8.8%
	2 = \$10,000 - \$19,999	43	14.5%
	3 = \$20,000 - \$29,999	52	17.5%
	4 = \$30,000 - \$39,999	38	12.8%
	5 = \$40,000 - \$49,999	34	11.4%
	6 = \$50,000 - \$59,999	28	9.4%
	7 = \$60,000 - \$69,999	19	6.4%
	8 = \$70,000 - \$79,999	13	4.4%
	9 = \$80,000 - \$89,999	11	3.7%
	10 = \$90,000 - \$99,999	10	3.4%
	11 = \$100,000 - \$149,999	15	5.1%
	12 = More than \$150,000	7	2.4%
Frequency of Visit	1 = Less than one time per week	47	15.8%
	2 = 1-2 times a week	180	60.6%
	3 = 3-4 times a week	56	18.9%
	4 = More than 4 times a week	13	4.4%
Type of Restaurant	1 = Fast Food	86	29%
	2 = Casual Dining-Limited Service	89	30%
	3 = Casual Dining-Full Service	108	36.4%
	4 = Fine Dining-Full Service	13	4.4%

Statistical Assumptions

The statistical assumptions such as the normal distribution, multivariate normality, and homoscedasticity were examined. The results of Skewness ranged from -1.14 to .54, Kurtosis ranged from -.48 to 1.98, and the scatterplots showed that the data were normally distributed. The Bivariate Correlations Matrix ($<|.80|$) and the variance-covariance matrices with Box's test indicated that multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were not violated. The inter-item consistency (α) of all measurement items ranged from .77 to .90. Thus, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics Table

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean Server Disclosure	296	3.78	.80959
Mean Customer Feedback	296	3.93	.71439
Mean Customer Personal	296	3.15	.84270
Mean Satisfaction	296	3.76	.88687
Mean Prior Positive	255	3.21	.89761

Note. Mean Customer Feedback = Mean Customer Disclosure Providing Feedback; Mean Customer Personal = Mean Customer Disclosure of Personal Feelings; Mean Satisfaction = Mean Satisfaction of Service Recovery; Mean Prior Positive = Mean Prior Positive Experience

Table 5
Correlations Table

Variables		MeanSerDis	MeanCusFeed	MeanCusPers	MeanSatis	MeanPriorPos
MeanSerDis	Pearson Correlation	1	.362**	.186**	.755**	.340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00	.001	.000	.000
MeanCusFeed	N	296	296.00	296	296	255
	Pearson Correlation	.362**	1.00	.305**	.337**	.107
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.089
MeanCusPers	N	296	296.00	296	296	255
	Pearson Correlation	.186**	.305**	1	.189**	.288**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	0.00		.001	.000
MeanSatis	N	296	296.00	296	296	255
	Pearson Correlation	.755**	.337**	.189**	1	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.00	.001		.000
MeanPriorPos	N	296	296.00	296	296	255
	Pearson Correlation	.340**	0.11	.288**	.390**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.09	.000	.000	
	N	255	255.00	255	255	255

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. MeanSerDis = Mean of Server Disclosure; MeanCusFeed = Mean of Customer Disclosure Providing Feedback; MeanCusPers = Mean of Customer Disclosure of Personal Feelings; MeanSatis = Mean of Service Recovery Satisfaction; MeanPriorPos = Mean of Prior Positive Experience

Results of MANOVA

The results of MANOVA indicated that server disclosure had a significance on willingness of providing feedback ($F(16,146)=4.32, p<.01, \eta^2=.32$), on willingness of providing personal feelings ($F(16,146)=2.65, p<.01, \eta^2=.23$), and on customer satisfaction of service recovery ($F(16,146)=15.06, p<.01, \eta^2=.62$). Prior positive experience also had a significance on willingness of providing feedback ($F(21,146)=2.42, p<.01, \eta^2=.26$), on willingness of providing personal feelings ($F(21,146)=4.67, p<.01, \eta^2=.40$), and on customer satisfaction of service recovery ($F(21,146)=1.68, p<.05, \eta^2=.19$).

Table 6

Multivariate Test Table^a

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.984	2925.723 ^b	3.000	144.000	.000	.984
	Wilks' Lambda	.016	2925.723 ^b	3.000	144.000	.000	.984
	Hotelling's Trace	60.953	2925.723 ^b	3.000	144.000	.000	.984
	Roy's Largest Root	60.953	2925.723 ^b	3.000	144.000	.000	.984
MeanSerDis	Pillai's Trace	1.126	5.479	48.000	438.000	.000	.375
	Wilks' Lambda	.206	6.257	48.000	429.086	.000	.409
	Hotelling's Trace	2.414	7.174	48.000	428.000	.000	.446
	Roy's Largest Root	1.754	16.008 ^c	16.000	146.000	.000	.637
MeanPriorPos	Pillai's Trace	.825	2.635	63.000	438.000	.000	.275
	Wilks' Lambda	.366	2.734	63.000	430.680	.000	.285
	Hotelling's Trace	1.253	2.837	63.000	428.000	.000	.295
	Roy's Largest Root	.757	5.265 ^c	21.000	146.000	.000	.431
	Wilks' Lambda	.186	1.529	213.000	432.763	.000	.429
	Hotelling's Trace	2.332	1.562	213.000	428.000	.000	.437

Table 6 (continued)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Roy's Largest Root	1.143	2.349 ^c	71.000	146.000	.000	.533

a. Design: Intercept + MeanSerDis + MeanPriorPos + MeanSerDis * MeanPriorPos

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Note. MeanSerDis = Mean Server Disclosure; MeanPriorPos = Mean Prior Positive Experience

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	MeanCusFeed	78.050 ^a	108	.723	2.517	.000	.651
	MeanCusPers	109.228 ^b	108	1.011	2.913	.000	.683
	MeanSatis	143.721 ^c	108	1.331	5.673	.000	.808
Intercept	MeanCusFeed	1197.176	1	1197.176	4168.830	.000	.966
	MeanCusPers	804.931	1	804.931	2318.375	.000	.941
	MeanSatis	845.160	1	845.160	3603.154	.000	.961
MeanSerDis	MeanCusFeed	19.867	16	1.242	4.324	.000	.321
	MeanCusPers	14.743	16	.921	2.654	.001	.225
	MeanSatis	56.533	16	3.533	15.064	.000	.623
MeanPriorPos	MeanCusFeed	14.605	21	.695	2.422	.001	.258
	MeanCusPers	34.038	21	1.621	4.668	.000	.402
	MeanSatis	8.268	21	.394	1.679	.040	.194
MeanSerDis * MeanPriorPos	MeanCusFeed	32.807	71	.462	1.609	.008	.439
	MeanCusPers	37.077	71	.522	1.504	.020	.422
	MeanSatis	25.111	71	.354	1.508	.019	.423

Table 7 (continued)

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Error	MeanCusFeed	41.927	146	.287			
	MeanCusPers	50.691	146	.347			
	MeanSatis	34.246	146	.235			
Total	MeanCusFeed	4037.625	255				
	MeanCusPers	2619.778	255				
	MeanSatis	3744.556	255				
Corrected Total	MeanCusFeed	119.977	254				
	MeanCusPers	159.919	254				
	MeanSatis	177.967	254				

a. R Squared = .651 (Adjusted R Squared = .392)

b. R Squared = .683 (Adjusted R Squared = .449)

c. R Squared = .808 (Adjusted R Squared = .665)

Note. MeanCusFeed = Mean Customer Disclosure Providing Feedback; MeanCusPers = Mean Customer Disclosure of Personal Feelings; MeanSatis = Mean of Service Recovery Satisfaction

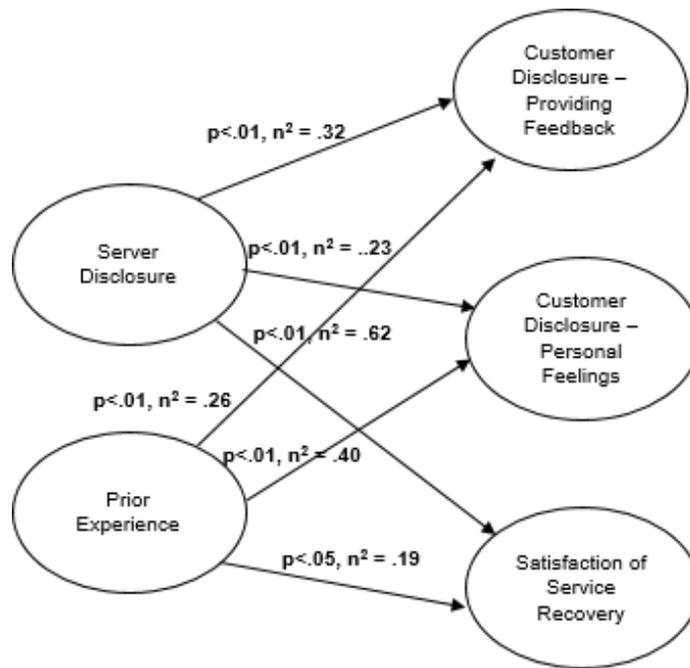


Figure 4: Full study results of MANOVA
 Note: → = significant; P = p-value, n^2 = effect size

Additional Analysis

The questionnaire also included questions to analyze behavioral intentions based on participants’ positive or negative restaurant experiences. In response to the question, “On average, how often do you spend on a meal while dining out?”, most participants answered that they spent an average of \$15 when dining by themselves and an average of \$50 when dining with others. The next question asked, “In general, what is your average tip percentage for...”, with a sliding scale for five conditions. The conditions and results are as follows: “For excellent service” the most common tip was 20%. “For good service” 20% and “For bad service” 10%. The most common tip percentage for “service recovery satisfaction” was 20%, but when participants experience “service recovery dissatisfaction,” the most common tip percentage was 0%.

Participants were also asked, “When you had a bad service experience in a restaurant, would you share this bad experience with others?”, 202 (68%) participants said that they would share a bad experience with a restaurant. The next question asked, “Through which communication channel(s) would you share the bad experience? (Choose all that apply).” One hundred and forty-two (47.8%) participants answered that they would share their bad experience by word-of-mouth, 99 (33.3%) through social media, 73 (24.6%) by online review sites, and 47 (15.8%) by informing the restaurant personnel. Similarly, participants were asked, “When you had a good service experience in a restaurant, would you share this good experience with others?” Two hundred and seventy-three (91.9%) participants answered yes. For the question, “Through which communication channel(s) would you share the good experience? (Choose all that apply),” the following responses were given: 162 (54.5%) would do so by word-of-mouth, 167 (56.2%) through social media, 108 (36.4%) by online review sites, and only 57 (19.2%) by informing the restaurant personnel.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Hospitality literature has found that repeat customers have a positive effect on a restaurant's bottom line (Andreassen, 2000; Crosby et al., 1990; Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015; Oh, 2002). Therefore, building relationships with customers is key for success in the restaurant industry. This study used the SPT for the theoretical framework as the theory demonstrates how communication, specifically in the form of mutual disclosure, is the primary driving force for establishing and maintaining a relationship between two parties. This study was among the few that have applied the SPT to the restaurant industry. In fact, the very first study to apply the SPT to the restaurant industry was only four years ago (Hwang et al., 2015). In the study, Hwang et al. (2015) gave mutual disclosure two distinct roles that apply specifically to a restaurant: server disclosure and customer disclosure. Using the constructs created by Hwang et al. (2015) made it easier to apply the SPT to the restaurant industry. The constructs also prove to be a beneficial guide for understanding how to maintain relationships with restaurant employees and customers.

The theory was chosen for this analysis about service recovery satisfaction because in the high-volume interaction of the restaurant industry, mistakes are bound to happen. When they do, there is no doubt that customers notice and are affected. A two-way communication can help to facilitate customer satisfaction of service recovery (Hwang et al., 2013; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Schuckert et al., 2019). It is important for restaurant employees to learn these practical ways to

provide customer satisfaction of service recovery. After all, one of the main goals for a restaurant is customer satisfaction. If the restaurant wants to maintain a relationship with a customer, employees must be sure that a service failure does not upset a customer so much so that they end the relationship with the restaurant (Kenesei & Kolos, 2018; Silber et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2018). Just as in any relationship conflict can make the relationship stronger as both parties use communication skills to help them find a deeper understanding of each other. Discovering how the relationship built by server-customer communication is strengthened by repeat experiences (including service failure and satisfying recoveries), can help restaurants create effective service recovery procedures (Nugraha et al., 2016; Severt, 2002).

This study investigated the social interaction between restaurant servers and customers specifically exploring how server disclosure and customer's prior experience influences satisfaction of service recovery. The SPT was used to guide the formation of hypotheses and assignment of independent and dependent variables. The constructs include: server disclosure, prior experience, customer disclosure-providing feedback, customer disclosure-personal feelings, and satisfaction of service recovery.

This study differs from previous studies in that it identifies two dimensions of customer disclosure: willingness of providing feedback and personal feelings about the service experience. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to apply prior experience to the SPT while adapting it to restaurants and the effects of service recovery satisfaction.

This chapter will interpret the results of the study and consider whether the hypotheses are supported or refuted. A cross validation from previous literature will be done by examining how new findings from this study are linked with previous literature. This discussion will also analyze the significance of the relationships between variables, the level of effect between

relationships with the variables, and interpret how the results can be generalized to the server-customer interaction during service recovery in a restaurant setting.

Statistical Interpretations

The statistical results of MANOVA showed that there was a significant relationship between server disclosure and customer disclosure providing feedback with a medium effect. This study also found that server disclosure had a significant impact on customer disclosure providing personal feelings, but with a small effect. Server disclosure was found to significantly influence customer satisfaction of service recovery with a strong effect. In fact, server disclosure's impact on customer satisfaction of service recovery showed the highest level of significance of all the construct relationships tested.

In the study's questionnaire, all questions regarding prior experience were changed in the positive direction to help in interpretation of results. It was found that prior positive experience significantly influenced customer disclosure willingness of providing feedback but had a small effect. Therefore, prior experience has less of an impact on customer disclosure-willingness to provide feedback than server disclosure does, reiterating the importance the server's performance during service recovery scenarios. Prior positive experience did show a significant impact on willingness of providing personal feelings at a medium effect, demonstrating that prior experience is more significant on customer disclosure providing personal feelings than does server disclosure; however, server disclosure has more impact on customer disclosure providing feedback about the restaurant's offerings. This study also found that prior positive experience has an impact on customer satisfaction of service recovery, but at a small effect. In fact, this relationship had the lowest impact of all construct relationships, and a considerable difference compared to server disclosure's effect on customer satisfaction of service recovery. This further

reiterates the notion that the customer heavily evaluates the server's performance during service recovery scenarios. Of the constructs tested, the results of this study show that the server disclosure is the most important factor of customer satisfaction of service recovery. These results are in line with findings in the literature that show the performance of front-line employees has the most influence on customer's perceptions and future behavioral intentions (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Crosby et al., 1998; Hwang et al., 2013; Kim & Ok, 2010). Results supported all six hypotheses although H1, H3, and H5 have a stronger effect and higher significance than H2, H4, and H6.

Survey Interpretations

For the survey question, "The server tells you about his/her honest opinion" 182 (61.5%) participants felt confident that their server was disclosing with them honestly during service recovery however, many respondents were generally unsure of the server's honesty. This indicates that servers need to improve their communication skills to help customers perceive genuine concern. Delcourt et al. (2017) explain that this is especially important during the event of service recovery because the customer is already disappointed in the service failure. Hence, servers need to help the customers feel confident that their problem will be honorably fixed.

For the survey question, "I am willing to provide feedback about the restaurant's offerings" the majority (234 or 79%) of the respondents reported that they were willing to provide feedback about the restaurant's offerings, however, this question did not specify to whom the customer provides feedback. For the question, "I am willing to report the service failure to the restaurant" there was a tie for somewhat agree and strongly agree (107 or 36% for each), revealing that 214 (72%) participants are willing to report an error directly to the restaurant. The results of these two measurements show that generally people are willing to

report feedback concerning the restaurant's offerings as well as reporting an error to the restaurant. This finding supported previous research conducted by Hwang et al. (2015) which found that customers perceive their disclosure to servers as an opportunity to inform the server of their personalized preferences. However, for the question, "I don't feel comfortable providing negative feedback to the server" 110 (37%) felt a bit uncomfortable providing negative feedback to the server. This could be interpreted that customers are somewhat conflicted about providing negative feedback directly to the server. Previous studies have indicated that customers feel uncomfortable providing information about their services until they have developed confidence in the server (Hwang et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2009; Nugraha et al., 2016; Tang & Wang, 2012).

Additionally, for the survey question, "I am willing to express my feelings about the quality of service," results show that a large number of respondents 231 (78%) were willing to do so. Most participants were also willing to share personal preferences with their server (221 or 75%), but most customers did not feel that it is important to disclose personal information beyond preferences with the server. This was identified in the response to the question, "I do not like to share my personal experiences with the server," where (99 (33.3%) answered somewhat agree, 61 (20.5%) answered somewhat disagree, and 50 (16.8%) answered neither agree or disagree.

When considering the reaction their server had to the service failure, 204 (69%) participants found the server's response was acceptable. Furthermore, for the question, "I am satisfied with the way the server handled the situation" 219 (74%) were at least somewhat satisfied with the server's performance. Upon a deeper evaluation of the server 211 (71%) participants agreed that the server acknowledged the service failure and 214 (72.2 %) were satisfied in the response the server had to their complaints. Similarly, for the question, "The

server provides reasonable solutions while handling customer complaints,” 212 (72%) at least somewhat agreed with the procedures that the server proposed. These results show that a server’s performance greatly effects the way customers perceive the service recovery process. As the server is the front-line employee, and thus, the first respondent to a restaurant customer’s complaint, they are evaluated with watchful eyes of customers. This assumption agrees with the study conducted by Kim and Ok (2010), which found that a customer’s perceived service quality is largely influenced by a total evaluation of the server’s technical and communication skills.

As tipping is a recompence intended primarily for the server, it can be interpreted as a form of feedback from customers. The results of this study showed that customers will generally tip 20% to servers who provide good service with the tip percentage remaining the same (20%) for excellent service. However, for bad service, tip percentage generally goes down to 10%. Furthermore, when tipping in the event of a service failure, participant responses showed drastic results in the survey. Customers who were satisfied with service recovery tipped 20%, but customers who were dissatisfied with service recovery tipped 0%. These results demonstrate the importance of a restaurant’s ability to elicit customer satisfaction of service recovery.

About providing feedback, the survey results also showed that 273 (91.9%) typically share their good experience with others, and 239 (80%) participants do so using the communication channel of informing restaurant personnel. Conversely, 202 (68%) participants still share their bad experience with others with 249 (83.8%) choosing the communication channel of informing restaurant personnel. This finding shows noticeable results regarding the responses that customers choose to report a bad experience to the restaurant.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

As stated in the SPT, a disclosure relationship begins with one individual initiating disclosure and is successful when the other party chooses to respond by disclosing (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Tang & Wang, 2012). In a restaurant setting, the server should be the one initiating the disclosure relationship as the customer is the server's guest. Part of a server's job description is to help customers feel comfortable and welcomed to the restaurant (Muller, 1999). In fact, the first step of the service delivery process suggests the server to promptly initiate the interaction with customers by greeting and welcoming them to the restaurant (Muller, 1999). Therefore, initiating disclosure is one of the server's in-role customer expectations (Andreassen, 2000; Gerlach et al., 2016; Kaminakis et al., 2019). When the server has expert technical and communication skills, they can demonstrate extra-role job performances, using server disclosure as a tool (Andreassen, 2000; Gerlach et al., 2016; Kaminakis et al., 2019). When servers have proficiency or levels of expertise in their technical and communication skills, they can confidently disclose information about the restaurant's offerings and make menu suggestions in a knowledgeable and likeable way (Andreassen, 2000; Hwang et al., 2013; Kang & Hyun, 2012). Therefore, these expert technical and communication skills can be highly beneficial for customer perceptions of service recovery. Servers can initiate disclosure with a customer by welcoming them and then build a relationship as they converse about menu specials, suggestions, questions and requests. In this way, servers can use disclosure as a tool to start a conversation and help customers feel more comfortable when disclosing more personal needs and expectations. This level of comfort can then be established when a server error occurs to elicit more genuine feedback from the customer, even if the feedback feels negative (Hwang et al., 2015; Oh, 2002; Wu et al., 2018). The results of this study showed that most customers are willing to provide

feedback, but when the experience is perceived as negative customers began to feel less comfortable disclosing feedback. As Hwang et al. (2015) found that an established customer relationship with servers will help customers feel more comfortable disclosing service evaluations perhaps an established relationship will also help customers feel more comfortable in providing negative feedback directly to the server. This is important because if customers report a service failure directly to their server, the server can provide a quicker response and more promptly resolve the issue.

Customers' personal feelings indicate a certain level of intimacy, which is not easily revealed or detected, but the SPT shows that disclosure can begin to penetrate to deeper levels of an individual's core characteristics and beliefs (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000). After disclosure has been established and developed, the disclosure can be the channel from which individuals learn more personal details about each other (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Tang & Wang, 2012). Kang and Hyun (2012) found that when servers disclose more personal advice such as recommendations for mechanics, babysitters, doctors, etc., customers tend to feel higher levels of comfort in revealing true perceptions and evaluations of a restaurant services. Perhaps these types of personal recommendations are perceived to be provided with good intentions. However, the results of this study showed that customers do not feel it is important to disclose their personal feelings with the server. Altman and Taylor (1973) found that the more one person discloses to another, the more comfortable the other person will be to disclose personal information. So, the more personal information that a server provides, the more likely the customer will feel comfortable enough to report an error directly to server.

As found in the literature, service failures and the process of service recovery can elicit heightened customer emotions (Choi & Choi, 2014; Delcourt et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2009; Wu

et al., 2018). Therefore, it is important for servers to recognize and facilitate the emotions that arise in customers while disclosing perceptions of service failure and service recovery (Delcourt et al., 2017; Gerlach et al., 2016). The server can more easily facilitate customer emotions by displaying comprehension of customer emotions and demonstration of benevolent behaviors (Gerlach et al., 2016; Kang & Hyun, 2012). Delcourt et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of server's execution of benevolent behaviors such as positive emotional displays, confidence, and genuine concern for customer dissatisfaction. When servers can perform these benevolent skills and react positively to customer emotions, the customer will most likely feel that the server truly cares, honors, and respects the customer's emotional responses (Delcourt et al., 2017; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Wu et al., 2018). During service recovery procedures, once the customer reports the problem the server is under high levels of scrutiny, especially when the customer initially feels uncomfortable disclosing to the server (Chen & Kim, 2019; Hwang et al., 2015; Lo et al., 2017). This study's findings suggest that, aside from the customer perception of justified compensation, the server's performance becomes the most critical driver for customer satisfaction of service recovery. The principles of the SPT show that during communication interactions individuals will calculate the costs and rewards of disclosing (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Baack et al., 2000; Osatuyi et al., 2018). Therefore, it is important that customers feel that their disclosure of a service failure is worth feeling uncomfortable. The prompt and respectable reaction of a server can set the tone for customer satisfaction of service recovery (Choi & Choi, 2014; Kenesei & Kolos, 2018). By keeping lines of communication open during the process of service recovery servers can help customers feel like they are included in offering some reassurance for the customer (Guchait et al., 2014). Server disclosure can also be interpreted in the form of performance of compassion, professional knowledge, and genuine efforts, which can influence

customer perceptions (Crosby et al., 1990; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Kim & Ok, 2010). Nonetheless, the more skillful and confident the server is, the more confident the customer will be in server's abilities (Hwang et al., 2015; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Kim et al., 2009).

When the customer revisits the restaurant, prior experience can help both the server and the customer build a disclosure relationship (Chen & Kim, 2019; Nugraha et al., 2016). Marchiori and Cantoni (2016) found that prior experience is an accumulation of knowledge. The server can utilize this knowledge about individual customer needs, preferences, and expectations built from customers disclosing during prior experiences to enhance levels of service. With prior experience, the customer will also have a broader knowledge about the operations and offerings of a restaurant i.e., procedures, specialties, accommodations, etc., which can help them disclose their more personalized preferences and needs (Kim & Ham, 2016; Wen & Kwon, 2017). This knowledge can also help servers recognize what offerings customers prefer and facilitate genuine feedback as preferences change. This knowledge can also help chefs recognize the general food tastes and preferences that local customers prefer allowing them to accommodate to local preferences.

Severt et al. (2005) found that customers renew or update their perceptions after each visit. This notion that prior experience is a building of knowledge can help customers feel more comfortable providing feedback after receiving a good reaction from servers when providing feedback during prior experiences. Nugraha et al. (2016) found that prior experience can act as a tool for reducing customer uncertainty, suggesting that once customers have previously provided feedback and received a positive reaction from servers during new visits, the customer will feel more comfortable to continue providing feedback to the server. A customer's prior experiences in a restaurant can also help both customers and servers view repeat patronage as a relationship

builder. Severt et al. (2005) suggest that after multiple prior experiences customers will feel more comfortable in revealing personal information, thereby enabling servers to provide more individualized and customized services. This will elevate levels of service that servers are able to provide.

Polo-Pena et al. (2013) found that first-time customers evaluate a restaurant based on tangible experiences, while customers with prior experiences are more inclined to judge a restaurant experience based on intangible and benevolent performances. Following this finding, servers' performance of benevolent behaviors become more important when customers return to the restaurant. Perhaps the reason that this study revealed prior experience to have a stronger effect on customer disclosure of personal feelings is that customers are evaluating the experience based on these benevolent characteristics and using their emotional reactions as a filter for their perceptions. As service failures can elicit customer emotions, prior experiences of disclosure and the building of company-customer relationships can affect the customer's emotional perception of service recovery procedures (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Polo-Pena et al., 2013). When customers have a library of memorable satisfying prior experiences, customers might be more understanding when a service failure happens as they understand that the level of service and food quality are usually satisfying (Severt et al., 2005). Thus, customers may be more patient during a service recovery process with positive prior experiences. Conversely, if customers have had negative prior experiences, for which the server showed little or no compassion, the results of service recovery may be a complete loss of the customer (Severt et al., 2005; Wu et al., 2018). Thus, a server's performance during service recovery is even more important when customers have had a negative prior experience.

As Andreassen (2000) explained, the two most common responses to service failure are exit and voice, thus the server should help the customer feel comfortable to report the bad experience directly to them instead of others outside restaurant personnel. However, the findings of this study demonstrate that there is room for improvement of servers helping customers feel comfortable in reporting bad experiences directly to them in order to have the opportunity to bring the bad experience back to levels of customer satisfaction.

Restaurant managers can benefit from the findings of this study by using the information to design improved training procedures enhancing customer satisfaction of service recovery. Service recovery satisfaction requires servers to be efficient in their technical skills, but also in their communication skills (Hwang et al., 2015; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Lo et al., 2017). Andreassen (2000) found that the intangible responses of servers can be more effective than tangible compensations in customer satisfaction on service recovery. The findings of this study suggest that servers need to improve their benevolent performances during a service failure and their communication skills during recovery procedures. Restaurant managers can use these findings to institute server training programs that focus on benevolent server disclosure performances, and the effects of prior experience on customer perceptions of service failure and recovery procedures.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The setting of this study was a service scenario in the restaurant industry. The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of server disclosure on customer disclosure as well as the impact of prior experience on customer disclosure. Also, the study measured the influence of server disclosure on customer satisfaction of service recovery and the influence of prior experience on customer satisfaction of service recovery. Much research advocates that repeat customers are crucial for the financial success of a restaurant and that servers can have the most influence on building a lasting relationship (Crosby et al., 1990; Chen et al., 2008; Hwang et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2009). For this relationship to continue, the conditions of customer satisfaction must be maintained, even during the inevitable event of a service failure. This study found that server performance has a very significant influence on customer satisfaction of a service recovery procedures and prior experience has a significant impact on customer communication.

Restaurants are a unique industry in that customers pay a “mark-up,” or elevated food and drink prices, for service experiences that rely immensely on the performance of the server. Server performance was also proven to be especially important during service recovery processes. This study revealed the importance of servers’ ability to help customers feel comfortable in disclosing a service failure directly to the server. This study also revealed that server performance is an important driver for customer satisfaction of service recovery. The

study's results can assist restaurant managers in developing training programs to develop servers' communication skills to better facilitate customer satisfaction of service recovery.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is not without limitations. Although this study had 296 participants as a sample size, future research could extend the results from this study by collecting more data to relieve some demographic limitations. For example, there were fewer females (97 females compared to 199 males), and more than half of the participants earned a lower income (65% earned less than \$50,000 a year). Also, most participants typically dine at a casual dining restaurant (67%), so it was difficult to measure how customers dining in other settings perceived their level of service. Furthermore, this survey was collected from MTurk, asking the participants to recall a service failure experience during a recent restaurant visit. Future research could use a real-time scenario in a variety of restaurant settings (i.e. casual restaurant and fine dining restaurants) in order to gauge real time and more diverse customer reactions.

Another limitation was found while measuring prior experience. The survey question had the header statement, "Based on your past experiences with the restaurant, please select the best choice regarding the following questions." However, there was no qualifier in place for "past experiences." Future studies could quantify this statement to discover the effects that frequency and timespan of prior experience have on server-customer relationships and customer satisfaction of service recovery. The measurements for prior experience could also be modified to better fit into categories more specific to the hypotheses and constructs of this study. As, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to examine prior experience's influence on customer disclosure and customer satisfaction of service recovery, it was difficult to adapt measurements

from previous research to this study. This left a gap in the interpretation of how customers' prior experience influences customer perceptions of disclosure and service recovery procedures.

Future research can also include different independent variables such as trust, employees' emotional competency, customer revisit intention, word of mouth, and overall customer satisfaction, in order to further understand the drivers that influence customer satisfaction of service recovery in a restaurant setting.

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**APPENDIX:
IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENTS**

November 2, 2018

Bethany Brendlinger
Department of Human Nutrition & Hospitality Management
College of Human Environmental Sciences
The University of Alabama
Box 870311

Re: IRB # EX-18-CM-051-A "The Impact of Server and Customer Disclosure on Trust and Service Recovery Satisfaction in Restaurants"

Dear Ms. Brendlinger:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has reviewed the revision to your previously approved exempt protocol. The board has determined that the change does not affect the exempt status of your protocol.

Please remember that your protocol will expire on May 8, 2019.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal please include the assigned IRB application number. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participant

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM, CIP
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance



Completion Date 30-Oct-2017
Expiration Date 29-Oct-2020
Record ID 25091178

This is to certify that:

Bethany Brendlinger

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Research (Curriculum Group)
Non-Medical Investigators (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

University of Alabama



Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wcae9b608-f561-4605-bf52-0e13b9aabc67-25091178