

## **Perceived Tension in Post-Complaint Recovery: The Cross-Functional Theoretical Framework**

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**Abstract:** *There exists a dearth of frameworks that improve theoretical lenses into understanding post-recovery tension and satisfaction. This article reports on interactional influences within the tribes of employees, and customers and processes in attempt to defuse tension and improve corporate resilience and competitiveness. It provides a unified service system and integrated guide on recovery perspectives; and distinguishes itself by proposing a framework that recognizes the influences of employee-to-employee, customer-to-customer and process-to-process recoveries in dousing tension-driven effect of functional diversities on recovery. The paper recognizes perceived tension as a product of mindset and interdisciplinary dichotomies; its proficient handling attracts pleasurable experiences/actions. Tension(s) amongst customer, process, and employee recovery perspectives adversely affects customer retention and with the proposed framework, an improved theoretical grenade is supposedly made.*

**Keywords:** *Recovery, customer satisfaction, operations, human relations, tensions*

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### **I. Introduction**

Organizations foster loyal, product support, and viral behaviors from incumbent customers as well as trial and switching behaviors from potential customers by the manners they address disguests. Amidst the growing consumer dynamics, the aggressive quest for service quality and of course competitive advantage is gaining wide scholarship just as attempts to reposition market strengths via satisfactory complaint handling programs (Morrisson and Huppertz, 2010; Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012). Whereas the American Customer Satisfaction Index reports that the overall satisfaction with recovery for US firms has not sufficiently improved (ACSI, 2007); the continual surge of complaints filed with the Association of German Banks confirms that post-recovery satisfaction is a critical issue (O'Shea, 2007; Michel *et al.*, 2009). Another US-based report involving about 600 firms affirms that 56 percent of the customers believe that providers were slow in fixing re-occurring problems (Gross *et al.*, 2007); and worst still, 41% concludes that Austrian and German firms rarely had working complaint handling programs (Brüntrup, 2006). Johnston and Clark (2008) report that various UK service organizations, including holiday providers, railway companies, and police services, have post-recovery complaints jumping from 8 to 40 percent annually. In Nigeria, Awa *et al.* (2016) posit that regular use of the regulatory and legislative apparatus to force providers to reinstate disgusted cell-phone users further confirms the strength of complaint handling as a competitive weapon. Implicit is that poor complaint handling program causes lost of customer lifetime value (Rust *et al.*, 2004); if persisted, it threatens the provider's long-term survival (Michel and Meuter, 2008; Seawright *et al.*, 2008) and attracts legislative threats (Sengupta *et al.*, 2014; Awa *et al.*, 2016).

Further, effective recovery after a single failure encounter attracts greater delight than if the customer had error-free and narrow experiences in the first place but this is unlikely in more than one failure encounters (double sin) (Rod and Ashill, 2010; Augusto de Matos *et al.*, 2009). Nothing pleases a customer more than a reliable, first-time, and error-free recovery (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014; Abd-Rashid *et al.*, 2014) but its practical inevitability raises cross-functional activities and tension(s) on how to diminish the possible negative effect of word-of-mouth (Tronvoll, 2010; Michel *et al.*, 2009). Scholars (Michel *et al.*, 2009; Botschen *et al.*, 1996; Johnston and Michel, 2008) posit that recovery fails in customer retention because of yet unresolved tensions between the conflicting and diverse perspectives of customer, process, and employee recoveries given that supposedly these perspectives work independently and harmoniously as one entity to reinstate the disgusted customers. A typical customer judges tension-dousing recovery from the perspectives of service evidence that spans people (e.g., interaction with other referenced customers and with employees who provide the service); process (the actual procedural steps the customer experiences in resolving the issue); and physical evidence (inter-personal communications and physical surroundings of the service). Although providers often claim to have improved, the widespread perception is that contemporary recovery programmes stink and attract

perceived tensions (Brady, 2000; Bitner *et al.*, 1990) owing to weak synergic and lack of real-time integration of the inputs of the various recovery perspectives. Strategists want balanced input-output relations amidst seemingly conflicting objectives/tensions amongst key stakeholders; they struggle to succeed in managing different facets of tensions.

There is a dire need for complaint handling programs that proficiently address customers' tensions, prevent double deviation (Bitner *et al.*, 1990; Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012) and improve corporate resilience and competitiveness (Smith *et al.*, 2012; del Río-Lanza *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, given that Javitch (2010) and Dodd and Favaro (2006) posit that recovery-based tension is critical and directs the future flow of any enterprises, executives seek the prevalence and priorities customers and/or employees attach to recovery-based tensions, their significance to corporate reputations, and what should be done to reconcile short-term with long-term tensions. The priority theory suggests that although enterprises are poised to strategically manage all tensions to some extent but at any point in time, only one of them is most critical to unlock better performance. Dodd and Favaro (2006) assert that often executives chose wrong tension as their priority given that sometimes tensions masquerade one another. Similarly, the problem of reconciling short-term with long-term may, for instance, reflect growth versus profitability issues given that one front usually progresses at the expense of the other. Recovery-based tensions attract bad, neutral or even positive outcomes. Javitch (2010) posits that whatever dimensions tension takes, it is real and must be dealt with and on time. Scholars (Sengupta *et al.*, 2014; Smith *et al.*, 2012) suggest that to proficiently reduce tensions and prevent double sins in recovery requires an integrated approach since recovery binds the entire organization and constitutes a critical component of corporate reputation and spans the cross-functional activities of marketing, operations, and human relations and organizational behavior.

Marketing handles post-recovery satisfaction (Davidow, 2003; Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002); operations process and learn from mistakes (Johnston and Clark, 2008; Edmondson, 2011); and human relations and/or organizational behavior develop programs to educate and reward employees for proficiently dealing with customers' disgusts (Johnston and Michel, 2008; Kim *et al.*, 2009). This article proposes a multi-disciplinary and integrated guide on customer, process, and employee recoveries; and attempts to differ from extant literature (e.g., Michel *et al.*, 2009) by proposing a broadened framework that recognizes the positions of employee-to-employee, customer-to-customer and process-to-process recoveries in dousing recovery-driven tensions. Typically, employee-employee entities must be strengthened before dealing with external customers; experienced and delighted customers are worthy agents of tension reduction and well thought-out processes may be interwoven to proficiently address consumption-based issues. The belief is that within the value-chain, intra- and inter-dyads build stronger experiences and ties that ultimately span improved accord with external customers. The lay-out of this paper spans theoretical interfaces in recovery tensions, broadened perspective-specific tensions and solutions, proposed behavioral adjustments, and conclusion.

### **Theoretical interfaces in recovery tension**

Perceived tension in the context of service disgusts and service recovery relates to the mindset of want of information, disappointment or dissatisfaction with consumption-related experience(s). Subject to many factors, it often infuses anger, hurt feelings, distrust, extreme dislike and hate-speeches, and antagonism for a provider and its offerings. Perceived tension could also be good, neutral and even positive, especially when its effect spurs further interest and inquiries that may be beneficial to the parties involved. That customer felt disgusted does not amount to negative relationship in some cases; rather, it may simply mean differences in opinion and a spur to seeking more information as well as compromise and common grounds. Whether neutral, bad or positive, tension in service recovery generates negative and possibly harmful effects if left unaddressed and allowed to fester. Every customer seeks for peace of mind and balanced cognition as well as progress amidst tension; they go out of their ways to avoid tension or pretend it does not exist. However, action to deal with tension-driven experiences is subject to the depth of the ordeal and the existing relationship; if the issue is terribly bad, tension will be very high with high preponderance to switch especially when transactional paradigm triumphs. Conversely, where long-term relationship exists between the customer and the developer, new learning may be delayed on account that further experiences will compensate for the ordeals suffered. In any of these situations, the onus is on the manager to create a promising process platform to address the negative feelings of the customers and the employees objectively since a tension-free employee rubs off on the customers.

Johnston and Michel (2008) propose customer, process and employee recoveries in attempts address cross-functional tensions associated with failure recovery. Whereas marketing emphasizes customer recovery, customer experience and satisfying the customer after disgusts (Smith *et al.*, 2012; Tax *et al.*, 1998); operations theorists focus on process recovery that minimizes customers' time, learn from failures and prevent reoccurrence(s) even when failure is unreported (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Edmondson, 2011). Management theorists focus on employee recovery perspective; employee responses and recovery methods and how to prepare

employees to be proactive and perhaps reactive in identifying and dealing with disguests. Kim *et al.* (2009) propose that recovery encompasses situations where providers foster a corporate culture that trains employees to proactively rectify service failures even before complaints are registered. Studies (Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012; Augusto de Matos *et al.*, 2009) show that it is often the response manners rather than the failure in the core service(s) itself that cause discontent or have the potential to either restore and reinforce customer satisfaction or exacerbate the situation and drive switching behavior. Table 1 describes the orientations and the effectiveness of each perspective.

Table 1: Three perspectives of tension in service recovery

	Orientation	Fundamentals of recovery effectiveness
Customer Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing activities dominate; marketing research, relationship marketing, customer relationship management, and co-creation provide the necessary theoretical underpinning.</li> <li>Deals with disgusted customer experiences and post-recovery satisfaction.</li> <li>Identifies and recovers customer ordeals and attracts greater satisfaction than when the first rule of service quality applies (paradox).</li> <li>Satisfies customers after failure encounter(s) even when unreported.</li> <li>External and personal factors are necessary to deal with the ordeals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity and social justice, ethical relativism, ethical egoism, utilitarianism, golden rule, and distributive justice apply to minimize post-complaint attacks and to reposition trust.</li> <li>Avoid double failures.</li> <li>Minimize customer litigation and activities of consumer activists.</li> </ul>
Operations Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasizes production and delivery processes as well as improving future outcomes and processes by learning from today's mistakes.</li> <li>Internal and procedural and technology (e.g., front-office and back-office systems) are necessary to improve the results of the processes.</li> <li>Processes and Operations Management dominate; operations approach to recovery.</li> <li>Uses Total Quality Management (TQM), mystery shoppers, and critical incidents as well as Frequency Relevancy Analysis of Complaints (FRAC), Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), Sequence-Oriented Problem Identification (SOPI) or fishbone diagrams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly gathering of data on operations and processes to identify each customer's lifetime values and to learn about his failure points.</li> <li>Analyze service failure points and data to improve processes.</li> <li>Provide feedback on where the processes and operations need urgent attention.</li> </ul>
Employee recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trains and develops employees to be proactive and perhaps reactive in attempting to recover disgusted customers in order to avoid spreading of the negative feelings.</li> <li>Trained to listen attentively to the disgusted customers and speak with each separately to gain their perception of tension. Ensure that along with any emotional information, you discuss specific facts/events that led to or inflamed the situation.</li> <li>Trained to find common grounds; often each party has some concern the other party can agree with, and this becomes the foundation to bridge the gaps.</li> <li>Positively confront negative feelings and thoughts that arose from tension. Unless this happens, the problem may go away for the moment, but the hard feelings or thoughts will persist, and then a repeat conflict occurs.</li> <li>Encourage compromise; especially when relational paradigm exists, each disgusted customer must be willing to give in a little.</li> <li>Internal marketing and personal factors are involved to get employees satisfied and afterward customers.</li> <li>Develops motivational and reward mechanism to keep pleasurable behavior under control (Thorndikes law of effects).</li> <li>Theories from management, especially HRM and OB are useful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The syndrome is "internal recovery" of employees.</li> <li>Relationship amongst employees need be smooth to ensure every employee is well-equipped to get external customers satisfied</li> <li>Minimize negative "spillover" from employees to customers</li> </ul>

**Customer recovery**

Customer recovery is explained in terms of equity and perceived fairness theorem, and assurance of absence of re-occurrence of same issues and tensions (Siddiqui and Tripathi, 2010; Michel *et al.*, 2009). First, scholars (Edmondson, 2011; Michel *et al.*, 2009) posit that recovery program has strong likelihood to work after a single failure encounter; thus, its workability is in doubt when it creates same problems and tensions more than once (repeated sins are rarely forgiven). Recovery programs delight the customer if the initial failure leads to effective recovery and dousing of tension (Johnston and Fern, 1999) and spans strong likelihood to repurchase

(Smith *et al.*, 2012; del Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013) and to share experiences in a manner that encourages trial and switching behaviors from potential buyers and competitors' loyalists respectively (Christopher *et al.*, 2002; Awa *et al.*, 2016). Second in assessing recovery programs, equity and perceived fairness theorem provides the individuals' motivational and cognitive processes of weighing sacrifices (justice inputs) against rewards (justice outputs), and comparing the percentage of their gains to the ratio of referent others in order to ensure a haemostatic state (del Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013; Cengiz *et al.*, 2007). When efficiently planned and executed, Etzel and Silverman (1981) posit that recovery framework successfully identifies and recovers customer ordeals and attracts greater satisfaction than when the first rule of service quality applies (paradoxical scenario). Scholars posit that customer perception of fair treatment represents a significant factor in recovery evaluations (Vazquez *et al.*, 2010; Siddiqui and Tripathi, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2012). When inequity and ultimately tensions occur, equity and perceived fairness theorem provides a meaningful theoretical framework that shapes and reshapes consumer perceptions and diminishes negative word-of-mouth publicity (Sengupta *et al.*, 2014; Cengiz *et al.*, 2007).

However because service failure implies at least some bit of perceived unfairness, service recovery intends to re-establish satisfaction and justice from the customer's perspective. Amongst other sub-theories that propagate equity issues are ethical relativism - one universal standard or set of standards that judge(s) actions; ethical egoism - long-run greatest possible balance of good over evil; utilitarianism - one's action making the greatest good for the greatest number of people; golden rule - dealing with others in a manner you would want them to deal onto you; and distributive justice - discourages too much richness at the expense of the poor. Rather than impressing customers when something has gone wrong and tension created (Sengupta *et al.*, 2014; Maxham, 2001), the equity and social justice theory emphasizes identifying and addressing perceived errors in order to limit their harms and re-establish reputation in consumers' eyes, promote customer retention, and dissuade litigation, sharing of negative experiences, and sanction by consumer activists and consumer right organizations (de Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2012). Thus, equity theory minimizes perceived post-complaint attacks and is typical in repositioning trust and in minimizing tension-induced detrimental actions. The proxies of equity and perceived justice are distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness; they contribute significantly to customer evaluations of recovery-based tensions. Recovery refers to as the enterprises' program of actions intended to respond and/or to address perceived feelings of tensions and unfair treatments resulting from service mishaps (Kim *et al.*, 2009; East *et al.*, 2007). Distributive justice compares input-output relations and appraises recovery benefits relative to the associated costs (money and/or time) (Sengupta *et al.*, 2014; Smith *et al.*, 2012).

It describes the extent to which tensioned consumers assess and perceive recovery framework as being fair relative to the magnitude of the ordeals suffered (Edmondson, 2011; Holloway *et al.*, 2009). An aggrieved customer who experiences fair recovery outcomes is predisposed to reduce his tensions and to improve interpersonal relations with the provider. As a way of dousing perceived tension, studies (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002; Sparks and McColl-Kennedy, 2003) found that consumers expect mental and/or physical recovery outcomes (e.g., refunds, atonement, free services, reduced charges, repairs, replacements, rebates, and counterfoils) to be at least equals the ordeals suffered and/or proportional to the scores of referent others. Sparks and McColl-Kennedy (2003) reported that disgusted customers get tension-free status-quo when 50 percent pay-back is dedicated to recover for the disgusts. Procedural justice refers to as the perceived fairness of policies, rules, procedures, and criteria through which complaint handling processes and recovery outcomes are accomplished with clarity, flexibility, speed and timeliness, and the least hassles (del Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013; Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002). It is conceptualized as the ease-of-access to complaint process; the extent to which a disgusted customer is at liberty to accept or reject an outcome; the timeliness to complete the procedure; and the adaptability of the procedures to reflect the individualized circumstances of each aggrieved customer. Cho *et al.* (2003) and Tax and Brown (1998) found that most outcomes received by disgusted customers are largely tension-driven and cause financial losses because the affected consumers rarely get refunds for the cost of returning the defective items. Ruyter and Wetzels (2000) query if the specific recovery outcome (output) has been offered to the customers to get them out of the emotions of service failures and if such outcome offsets the costs (inputs) of the service failure.

Improper complaints handling reinforces negative impression and further results to double deviation (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Bitner *et al.*, 1990). In pecuniary and non-pecuniary issues, Goodman and Ross (1992) found that in procedural delays (no direct financial loss), 10 percent discount (compensation) impacted positively on reduction of tension. Finally, interactional justice relates to the inter-personal behavior in the enactment of procedures and the delivery of outcomes that settle-out the ordeals/tensions (Tax *et al.*, 1998; Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012) and address the traumatized emotions during and after service failures. Scholars (Yi and Gong, 2008; Casado *et al.*, 2011) refer to it as the extent to which disgusted customers feel their negative emotions (e.g., anger, hate, distress, and anxiety) had been addressed by their personal interactions with the service agents before accepting compensations. This is critical because Spreng *et al.* (1996)

posit that customer's ordeals should first be acknowledged and concern shown without which the compensation may result to negative responses. Leading customers through their negative experiences involves some sort of interactional treatments as timeliness; apology, courtesy, friendliness, concern, politeness, warmth, sympathy and empathy; willingness to listen and genuine interest; and pleasantness, assistance, objectivity, veracity, and attentiveness (del Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013; Tsarenko and Strizhakova, 2013).

### **Process recovery**

Service encounter is a process of interaction between customers and providers; the process may involve human (inter-personal) and non-human elements - equipment, facilitating goods, physical evidence and atmosphere (Ibrahim and Abdallahamed, 2014; Bitner *et al.*, 1990). From the conformance end, the emphasis is less of silo and more of cross-functional and process re-engineering as well as integrative and pervasive structuring of organizations to reflect complete tasks and processes. Davidow (2003) posits that recovery process comprises of complaints, firm's response, and post-complaint behavior. Developers rarely address customer issues proficiently when customers themselves are not encouraged to develop complaint attitude. The existence of service paradox and of course the absence of the first rule of service quality suggests developing mechanisms to encourage disgusted customers to register their tensions and to get compensated where necessary (Abd-Rashid *et al.*, 2014; Michel *et al.*, 2009). However, the manner of employee response counts; the complainants react to such response packages by engaging in either positive or negative post-recovery actions. Often providers float database and use information therein to predict customer life-time values and customer relationship management (CRM), and to ultimately build competitive advantage (Johnston and Clark, 2008; Gross *et al.*, 2007; Siddiqui and Tripathi, 2010). Cova and Dalli (2009) posit that tacit and real-time knowledge of relevant customer experience in a database is a corporate asset that logically precedes capital and market. What actually irritates customers after a failed recovery may not be they were unsatisfied rather the fear that same problem may reoccur in future (Johnston and Clark, 2008). Thus, learning from the mistakes may be more important than simply uncovering the mistakes and addressing them since process improvements that influence customer satisfaction represent a significant competitive advantage through recovery.

However, non-complainants deny providers the opportunity to learn and build experiences, and often pose economic burden when the affected consumers boycott the product and spread negative word-of-mouth (Edmondson, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2009; del Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013). Firms build front-office and back-office systems to detect failures and fill and support customer orders, and store all customers' information to help the recovery team brainstorm and make informed decisions on how to add values to the buyer-seller transaction in order to foster continuity. Amongst others, Michel *et al.* (2009) posit that Total Quality Management (TQM), mystery shoppers, and critical incidents are often used to monitor, detect, and measure failures and to track-down and analyze each customer's shopping profile in terms of demography, psychographics, attitudes, perceptions, purchase, and other characteristics that determine his preferences, activities, tastes, dislikes, likes, and complaints. TQM programs are written to include ISO 9000 certification, Malcolm-Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), and Six Sigma (see Corbett, 2006; George, 2003; Lee *et al.*, 2006). Finn (2001) opines that mystery shopping detects failures through filing-up mock purchases as well as confronting service centers with mock problems and mock complaints. Critical incidents describe the systematic categorization of what actually transpired using quantitative studies as well as customer's own narratives (qualitative) of critical incidents. Scholars (Botschen *et al.*, 1996; Stauss and Weinlich, 1997) perceive that learning from mistakes improves service process through traditional operations improvement techniques as Frequency Relevancy Analysis of Complaints (FRAC), Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) (records hot and cold complaints), Sequence-Oriented Problem Identification (SOPI) or fishbone diagrams (or Ishikawa diagrams). Stauss and Seidel (2005) note that FRAC prioritizes process recovery in terms of urgency of actions; frequently re-occurring problems require immediate action whereas less frequently occurring issues may be delayed a little or stored in the cooler.

Professor Kaoru Ishikawa's pioneering work on Quality Management developed cause and effect analysis (fishbone); a diagram-based approach of creative thinking that guides groups' analysis of states of nature when little quantitative data exist. The fishbone diagrams visually display potential causes of specific problems and their operational effects via logical actions; it defines the ordeals, identifies the main causes (e.g., people, policies, procedures, or plants), breaks down the main causes into identifiable problems, and develops action plans (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Stauss, 1993). The complete diagram created looks like the skeleton of a fish and follows the process of brainstorming to identify the problem and the major factors involved, discovers the root cause of a problem, uncovers difficulties in the processes, identifies where and why a process is defective, and analyzes the diagram. SOPI is a sequential incident method (Stauss, 1993) or a research approach that involves critical assessment of customer responses via combining and extending blueprinting of service encounters with assessing customer perceptions of critical incidents occurring in service encounters (Botschen *et al.*, 1996; Stauss, 1993). Stauss (1993) assumes that while blueprinting helps to learn potential stresses in the

existing service encounters, assessing customers’ opinions on the steps and sequences in service encounters has the capability of uncovering minor and critical incidents. The blueprint guides customers through the service and in unveiling their experiences during individual service encounters though particular emphasis is placed on negative incidents or “fail point” related to the encounters (Stauss, 1993; Stauss and Seidel, 2005).

**Employee recovery**

Recovery here is defined in the context of tension based on employees’ response to service failure; it is enterprise-based opportunity to resolve complaints and tensions, correct impressions and dissatisfaction and (re)establish trust through proficient complaint handling. Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987) posit that employees assume defensive marketers; they manage customer tension and dissatisfaction, create switching barriers and reduce customer turnover, and increase loyalty and purchase frequency. In doing these, McGrath (2011) and Kim *et al.* (2009) posit that enterprises craft corporate culture of training service executives to encourage customers to register complaints and tensions in order to build corporate reputations and foster proactive behavior intended to constructively rectify service failures (as a team) even before complaints and/or negative feelings unfold. Chris Argyris’ maturity theory, McGregor’s theory Y, Elton Mayo’s human relations theory, and others, treat employees as mature (empowered) and give them the lee-way to tactically and discretionally design how to fix ordeals in order to make them more committed to customer retention. Studies (Michel *et al.*, 2009; Edmondson, 2011; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2010) report that the aftermath of employee recovery include, amongst others, spill-over onto customers, improved market reputation and production runs as well as higher employee morale and job satisfaction and low absenteeism and intention to quit.

However, discussion on customer satisfaction with recovery is often lopsided; taking outward scenario and ignoring internal recovery roles of supporting employees in their onerous task of handling complaints (Tronvoll, 2010; Bowen and Johnston, 1999). Bell and Luddington (2006) affirm that dealing with complaints has a direct negative effect on service personnel commitment to customer service. Similarly, Johnston and Clark (2008) report that poor internal service recovery leads to dissatisfied and disillusioned customers and stress-filled and negatively disposed staff, who suffer powerlessness and alienation in sorting out the issues. Fair treatment to employees transcends the display of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) toward customers and ultimately spills-over to employee morale and performance resulting from customer confidence and low defection (Tronvoll, 2010; Michel *et al.*, 2009; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2010). Awa *et al.* (2011) posit that through the company-wide intranet/philosophy emphasizing customer mindedness, management encourages the mindset that every employee, team, or unit in the value chain is simultaneously a supplier of, and a customer of, ideas, and/or services in the act of recovery (internal recovery). The value chain starts with the morale of internal customers and individuals who understand, accept, and fulfill their respective roles in implementing the marketing strategy.

**Broadened perspective-specifics in tensions and solutions**

Service recovery and customer tension are often treated with much levity irrespective of the insightful scholarships on how to identify its causes and have them proficiently addressed. Michel *et al.* (2009) attribute such levity to the interdisciplinary activities and function-bound thoughts. The decision-makers exhibit ‘idiosyncratic given’ that serves as a template that guides functional and emotional peculiarities and dictates their mindset about future, alternatives, and consequences (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). Often cross-functional epoch amongst decision-makers creates tensions and delays and/or even inhibits best recovery practices. The three disciplinary framework proposed by Michel *et al.* (2009) provides insight into understanding the key tensions. Although the framework may be biased and not completely exhaustive and/or may not be of equal relevance to every situation, we adopt and improve upon it in spite of its seeming strength. The paper presents a 3 by 3 matrix framework (see table 2) to step-up the provisions of Michel *et al.* (2009) and to really capture a more in-depth picture of the interdisciplinary significance of the three recovery perspectives. The framework recognizes that interfaces between customers on one hand and between employees on the other hand as well as between the processes have significant role on actual recovery of disgests.

**Table 2: Three Perspectives on Service Recovery**

	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Customer</b>	<b>Process</b>
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactions amongst employees of all cadres generate best recovery practices.</li> <li>• Employee-to-employee satisfaction leads to external customers’ satisfaction</li> <li>• Systems approach to problem solving is real.</li> <li>• N</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage complaint behaviors</li> <li>• Create rewards for customer retention</li> <li>• Focus on relational behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flow of complaint data</li> <li>• Employees’ actions and zero failure syndromes</li> </ul>

Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer focus</li> <li>• Encourage complaint behaviors</li> <li>• Create rewards for customer retention</li> <li>• Focus on relational behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage customer-to-customer positive experience sharing.</li> <li>• Encourage social group formation, group cohesiveness and social platforms, where satisfied customers share their experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction and productivity</li> <li>• Fixing emotions and actual problems</li> <li>• Objective extent and perceived magnitude of failure</li> </ul>
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flow of complaint data</li> <li>• Employees' actions and zero failure syndromes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction and productivity</li> <li>• Fixing emotions and actual problems</li> <li>• Objective extent and perceived magnitude of failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation and integration in the value chain</li> </ul>

**Employee-employee recoveries**

Address employees' tension first before they can proficiently address external customers' ordeals. The company-wide philosophy of relationship marketing and its concomitant customer mindedness emphasizes employer-to-employee dyad to build developer-customer and customer-customer accords. Scholars (Christopher *et al.*, 2002; Armstrong and Kotler, 2007) posit that in the competitive world, firms treasure meaningful and richer intra-and-inter-contacts, more holistic and more personalized service quality that exceeds expectations at each step and the use of consumption experience to build stronger ties within the value-chain. However, tension arises when marketing focuses on product features and not customer satisfaction, minimal interest with co-workers and customers, limited customer contacts, and quality being primarily the business of production. Further, tension occurs when employees are treated immature and machine that can be tuned in certain ways. McGregor's theory Y and Chris Argyris' theory suggest that man seeks responsibility when empowered and treated mature to deal with ordeals or when given challenging assignments and discretion to tactically design the workflow (laissez-faire). Some recovery policies and procedures may be so stringent that the service officers are handicapped (and perhaps immature) to address certain customer issues on time. Management is to provide the necessary resources, authority and power (expressed in the regulations, policies, routines and procedures) without which the service officers will lack the initiative template to deal with service ordeals proficiently and on time.

Tension further arises when employees' operating expenses are the major instruments for assessing efficiency irrespective of differences in situations. Barlow and Moller (1996) assume that such tension hampers morale, employee retention, and job satisfaction and often causes employees to push dissatisfied customers by the corner. The interdisciplinary tensions in service recovery may also be caused by collusion amongst core values, norms, artifacts, rituals and other indices of corporate culture and perhaps subcultures, all of which may be strong, pervasive, and unifying and thus shape corporate mission, vision, and philosophies. Adherence to the multiplicity of unifying and/or dominant corporate core values as well as to other values particular to them is a source of tension. Some dominant culture (e.g., customer is always right) may be illusion or distraction of reality and should be worked on to reflect less argument with customers and recovery as core values. Dodd and Favaro (2006) propose that other tensions faced by employees relate to issues of profitability/growth with common bond of customer benefit; long-term/short-term batting to sustain current earnings; and whole/part batting with assets of synergy. In each case of Dodd and Favaro's (2006) propositions, a surge in progress of one front usually erodes the progress of another; for instance, boost in growth damages profitability just as higher profitability erodes growth. Similarly, building for tomorrow erodes today's results though emphasis on today's results involves compromising future strengths. Employees who are able to deal with these tensions proficiently exhibit loyalty that rubs off on other employees and ultimately customers; the value chain starts with the morale of internal customers - employees and units that must understand, accept, and fulfill their respective roles in implementing marketing strategy.

Every employee, team, or unit in the firm's value chain is simultaneously a supplier of, and a customer of, ideas and/or services that reduce tensions. Organizations build atmosphere where internal customer satisfaction helps to attract and retain outstanding employees who appreciate and value their role in the delivery of superior services to recover external customers (Abd-Rashid *et al.*, 2014; Alrubaiee and Al-Nazer, 2010). They use localized social media (e.g., blogs, RSS, wikis, custom-built communities, social bookmarks, Massively Multi-player Online Games, collaborative planning software, intranet, or e-mails) to bring in unparalleled democracy and creativity as well as less expensive and real-time knowledge sharing and integration. For instance, Massively Multi-player Online Games bring employees from different geographical

locations together for virtual meetings (Bonsu and Darmody, 2008) in an attempt to mobilize tacit inputs into a new form of organized knowledge (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Terranova, 2000). The games permit co-operative networks of relationships that induce employees to unveil their creativity, control, belongingness, and affection by creating a diversity of codes and designs that define the game (Bonsu and Darmody, 2008). The more intense the gaming interface, the more employees share knowledge, post questions about current network events, and feel mutually beneficial interactions with the resultant me-too behaviors.

### **Employee-customer recoveries**

Bitner *et al.* (1990) classified service failure that results to customer tension into three - employee response to delivery systems failures (e.g., policy failures, delays and unavailable services, packaging errors, out-of-stock, defects, alterations, and deceptive information), employee response to customer needs and requests (order error and firm-side customer error), and lastly though not common, unprompted and unsolicited employee actions (false accusation on customers). Bitner *et al.* (1994) added the problem of customer behavior, which spans customers' drunkenness, verbal and physical abuses, breaking company policies, and uncooperative and unruly behavior. Studies show that over 23 percent of memorable encounters were directly related to employee responses (Bitner *et al.*, 1990; Morrisson and Huppertz, 2010), and 43 percent of dissatisfactory encounters were due to employees' ineptitude or unwillingness to respond proficiently (Hart *et al.*, 1990; Kim *et al.*, 2009; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2010). Cole (2001) reports that the sales revenue of Enterprise Rent-A-Car grew twice as much because the score for personalized service and recovery was high; a customer who forgets his driver's license is assisted to pick it up and if expired, he is taken to renew it. Bitner *et al.* (1990) argue that it is not the ordeal itself that causes the tension rather failure to handle the tension proficiently (double deviation). Hence, recovery involves a win-win (Treacy and Wiersema, 1995; Edmondson, 2011), service-dominant (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), sense-and-respond (Haeckel, 1999), and other thoughts that go beyond the traditional consumer orientation, which are intended to train and/or support service officers to recover disgusted customers even when they (the customers) are wrong (Stauss and Weinlich, 1997; Stauss and Seidel, 2005). It is a combination of internal and external perspectives of customer recovery; the internal perspective plays out well (internal marketing) before proficient satisfaction of disgusted customers becomes possible. We propose that effective employee and customer recoveries reduce tension via customer focus: this requires encouraging complaint attitude, creating rewards for customer retention, and focusing on relational accord.

### **Focus on customers**

When the core objective is to create more growth, then the first option is to focus more intently on customers. This implies that the recovery programmes should be positively differentiated from those of the competitors and across customers; should seek new and distinctive approaches to increase customer appeals; should be split into smaller autonomous businesses closer to the customers; and should penetrate new and fast-growing customer segments with less probable complaints. Dodd and Favaro (2006) post that these activities make increased profitability almost hard at the same time: they spur a proliferation of recovery programmes, increased complexity, and duplication and overlap across units. They also lure discounting, price promotion, and push sales techniques; and tempt acquiring weak positions in markets that appear apparently attractive.

### **Encourage complaint behaviors**

Tension arises when employees rarely encourage complaint behaviors associated with the emotional trauma and disappointment of previous experiences (Edmondson, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2009). Often disgusted customers take action that counter growth and profitability; they boycott product/firm, share negative experiences, and engage in abuses and confrontations (de Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013; East *et al.*, 2007; Michel *et al.*, 2009). Encouraging customer complaints provide opportunity to feel customers' ordeals, to communicate commitment and strengthen relational bonds, and to improve upon provider's learning and experience curves (Johnston and Michel, 2008; Edmondson, 2011) and ultimately growth and profitability. The Maussian socio-economic theory of gift-giving suggests that complaints are worthy gifts that help firms to build competitive advantage (Mauss, 1990); thus, constructive complainants are worthy friends (and not enemies) who have the tribe's interest and offer specialized insights (gifts) on how to recover or retain disgusted clients (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Bonsu and Darmody, 2008). Often tension rises when the recovery team perceives the complainants as enemies (Andreasen and Best, 1977) or believes that customers are always right even when the issue of failure is purely theirs (Stauss and Seidel, 2005; Stauss and Weinlich, 1997).



### **Create rewards for customer retention**

Often enterprises use traditional measurement and reward systems; they assess customer satisfaction by complaint rates and reward employees based on customer acquisition and customer attraction rather than on building relational epoch that prevents loss of customers through service failure and failed recovery. Scholars posit that it costs 5 to 7 times more to attract new customers than to retain incumbents (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Thwaites and Williams, 2006) and as little as 5 percent improvements in customer retention raise profitability to almost 100 percent (Coyles and Gokey, 2005). Further, about 90 percent of disgusted customers avoids the service provider (Business Week, 1984) and shares their experiences with 10 to 20 others whereas satisfied customers share their experiences with only 4 or 5 persons (Sousa and Voss, 2009; Morrisson and Huppertz, 2010). Though adversely affect profitability, growth here requires discounting, price promotion, and other push sales techniques to compensate for the disgusts.

### **Focus on relational epoch**

The critical role of employees in a relational epoch is to move the customer progressively upward in the customer loyalty ladder, from indifference prospect through product support and to advocate/viral (Christopher *et al.*, 2002). Scholars (Harris and Ogbonna, 2006; de-Jong and de-Ruyter, 2004) suggest that service employees are less likely to engage in service sabotage if they are trained to achieve proactive recovery and to desire to stay and pursue their career with their current firm. Thus, solo operations, win-lose, or zero-sum thoughts (Treacy and Wiersema, 1995) of the Fordism are gradually replaced by the post-Fordist application of Alvin Toffler's great vision of *do-it-yourself or sell-it-yourself* (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Toffler, 1981; Schuen, 2008). This emphasizes that relational behavior involves continuous accords among core stakeholders/actors (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000) and affirms that marketing thought is moving from tangible output and discrete transactions of good dominant (G-D) logic to on-going, value-in-use processes and event-driven relationships of service-dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). S-D demands the convergence of social knowledge of diverse marketing actors. Laughey (2010) writes that the Howard Becker's Art Worlds (1982) on the dynamics of productive social relations proposes that the art world is a conglomerate of artists, distributors, publicists, audiences, and other disparate groups, whose activities/interests colluded to give meaning and substance to the finished articles. The scholar opines that such integrated interest dispels the myth that works of art were unilaterally created by some intrinsic ingenuities of the developer and thus, minimizes investment in recovery. When customers are involved in the entire of process of product design and production, they complain less and believe in relational paradigm when faced with disgusts.

### **Employee-process recoveries**

Certain tensions may result from employee and process recovery exercises. Whereas process recovery involves the design of inter-connected and inter-dependent procedures, units, and systems that link the employees and customers and define how the common goal of improving service processes is achieved (general systems theory); employee recovery shows the intra-and inter-personal interactions (internal marketing) that facilitate or inhibit employees' willingness and capability to improve and apply the processes (de Rio-Lanza *et al.*, 2013; Michel *et al.*, 2009). Bonsu and Darmody (2008) posit that employees contribute to post-Fordist industry by constructing substances, meanings, and values for themselves and the society in which they belong or represent.

### **Flow of complaint data**

Granted that complaint data improves processes, its real-time flows within and across units of the whole that use it for decision-making is often an issue of concern (Homburg and Fürst, 2007). Again, complaint data collected may not be clearly categorized to reflect customer lifetime value by the designated unit(s) to guide differentiated decisions (Michel *et al.*, 2009) thereby isolating complaint data for resolution and not requiring reports for managerial decisions (Tax and Brown, 1998). The emphasis is employee and customer orientations; employee orientation goes with the slogans "See No Evil, Hear No Evil, and Speak No Evil" (Homburg and Fürst, 2007) by ensuring that customer feedbacks are objective and constructive and flow smoothly within the whole to ultimately resolve the issues. Fornell and Westbrook (1984) report that other units tend to isolate the customer service department and show less interest in customer ordeals when much negative data emanates from the complaint database.

### **Employees' actions and zero failure syndromes**

Often tension is caused by the dichotomies of discretion (empowered) and procedure as they provide the templates for employees' decisions. Empowered employees tactically and discretionally fix ordeals real-time to avert detrimental customer actions but some disgusted customers prefer recovery justice that is procedural or follows policies and rules. Studies show that when the empowered employees resolve complaints, they leave the

complainant to the risk of not getting proficient and satisfactory resolution (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Goodwin and Ross, 1992) since such scenario rarely permits huge investment in employee support and systems upgrades (Michel *et al.*, 2009). Corbett (2006) posits that firms aiming at no failure deal by investing in and complying with formal and certificated standards of quality improvement programs may have their employees reluctant to accept failures happening again if no defensive organizational behavior exists. For instance, Michel *et al.* (2009) posit that TQM-oriented process creates the impression that the company is on zero failure; thus, customer complaints and negative feedback then create dissonance and defensiveness among employees who may not take customer data very seriously.

### **Customer-customer recoveries**

The Cluetrain Manifesto's market theory and the power-based notions of customer-focused marketing promise reforms and evolve markets as networks for conversion, collaboration, communications, and co-operation (De-Madariaga and Valor, 2007; Mason *et al.*, 2008). Nicholson (1998) proposes the platform for market participation in the contexts of virtual herd, consumer tribe, or community based on natural dependence and the need to facilitate real-time experience sharing. Positive customer-customer interactions generate self-fulfillment (Cova and Dalli, 2009); and greater perceived values as measured by satisfaction, repurchase intentions, complaint rates, word-of-mouth, and ultimately customer-developer effect. Enterprise's recovery team leverages social knowledge by developing psychological systems of action that incorporate customer experiences, transform them, and personalize them (Abd-Rashid *et al.*, 2014; Cova and Dalli, 2009) in the present digital world, where inter-personal alignments and interactions are encouraged to ensure outstanding performance. The consumers' skills and creativity are the operant resources; customers create value for themselves and for others and therefore, successful corporate life largely rests on customer-to-customer sharing of socio-economic values (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Tapscott and Williams, 2006). Effective recovery-related conversion is U shaped; that is, satisfactory and unsatisfactory experiences are informally shared (customer-to-customer dyad) amongst peers (Tax and Chandrashekar, 1992; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1993).

Amongst others, studies on epidemic model (Mansfield, 1961), diffusion of innovation (Bass, 1969), purchase of food and household items in small Midwestern community (Katz and Lazasfeld, 1955), and purchase of air conditioners in Philadelphia suburb (Whyte, 1954) found firsthand or customer-to-customer recovery the most credible and critical form of influence in reducing perceived tensions. However, tension arises when satisfactory experiences are rarely shared or shared with distortion and least persuasiveness. The developers formulate policies that boost perceived value by managing customers' recovery experiences and the on-going customer-to-customer relationships in a personalized manner; they evolve platforms upon which customers regularly dialogue and share their post-recovery satisfaction with disgusted customers (Pralhalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), and form homophilous and heterophily social ties likened to communal esprit de corps (Parker and Castleman, 2009; Varman and Costa, 2008). Awa and Lebari (2015) opine that often developers informally assign certain responsibilities to certain consumers to inspire cohesiveness and communities' willingness to engage in customer-to-customer interactions and to allow positive experiences rub-off the effects of negative ones. Such tribal perspectives influence behavior more than formal marketing programs.

### **Customer-process recoveries**

Customer recovery reinstates and keeps customers after failed encounters whereas operations balance aggregate performance metrics and reduce tension by optimizing service processes. Michel *et al.* (2009) view customer and process recoveries in terms of customer satisfaction and productivity, fixing customer emotions and actual problems, and objective extent and perceived magnitude of failure.

### **Customer satisfaction and productivity**

Recovery team distinguishes her operations to reflect quality and innovative services and customer responsiveness in an attempt to build post-complaint satisfaction and its concomitant ideals. Studies show that quality and innovative recovery correlates significantly with returns on investment (Rust *et al.*, 2004; Singhal *et al.*, 2013), customer satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately profitability (Parker and Castleman, 2009; Kamakura *et al.*, 2002) though quality and customer satisfaction may surge at the expense of productivity and profitability (Thwaites and Williams, 2006; Michel *et al.*, 2009). Over-compensation to a disgusted customer or too much of expended resources to recover him may decrease productivity (Michel *et al.*, 2009) though post-complaint behavior may be enhanced (Davidow, 2003; McCollough *et al.*, 2000). Thus, there should be a trade-off between productivity and customer satisfaction to enhance profitability and avoid impairing value either ways.

### **Fixing emotions before actual problems**

Tension seems reduced when customers feel listened to and understood; and there exists honest interactions that deal with their emotions even before the actual ordeals are fixed. Even for relatively minor incidents, recovery may increase dissatisfaction and frustration and of course detrimental to post-consumption actions. Complainants want information and atonement; a reliable and credible *psychological calm-down that expresses acknowledgement of their ordeals*, what went wrong, why, and what the service provider will do (or has done) to reintroduce trust or to compensate and/or to avert re-occurrence (Zemke, 1994; Bitner and Broetzmann, 2005). Scholars (East *et al.*, 2007; Michel *et al.*, 2009; Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002) suggest that full credibility or acknowledging and accepting responsibility for the problems and giving empathy and timely and unambiguous explanation as well as being fair in investigating and analyzing complaints have positive impact on customers' emotions and post-complaint behavior even when the desired service standard is delayed. Thus, employees are encouraged not to place premiums on distributive justice (monetary compensation or product repairs) at the expense of procedural and interactional justice.

### **Objective extent and perceived magnitude of failure**

Operations management assesses the severity of service failures and tensions in customers' subjective and context-specific view of the harm (Michel, 2001; Webster and Sundaram, 1998). The answer to the question "what consequences does the service failure have for customers?" may lead to perceived differentiated criticality of the ordeals as well as differentiated recovery programs. Practically, service failure and tensions are assessed by their magnitude, frequency, time, severity, or criticality (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Michel, 2004) and not predominantly from the conformance (or provider's) sense. Conformance viewpoint addresses the question "what did we do wrong?" and perceived view questions "what consequences do the disgusts have on my life?" For instance, delays in service delivery may attract either high (the service in question is urgently needed and so delays attract major consequences) or low (the service is not urgently needed and so delays attract minor consequences) criticality. Failure is the same in the two ends but consumers prefer differentiated recovery programs based on perceived criticality; they prefer discount when low criticality is the scenario and re-performance in times of high criticality (Abd-Rashid *et al.*, 2014; East *et al.*, 2007; Michel *et al.*, 2009).

### **Process-process recoveries**

Recovery process involves value chain co-operation and integration to reflect positively on performance metrics. It may be a misnomer seeing recovery process only from the developer's ends; customers are encouraged to compress and make simple the process of sharing recovery experiences, especially positive ones and when decisions carry high perceived risks. Tension is often suffered when disgusts are proficiently addressed but the affected consumers feel reserved and rarely share freely their experiences with other customers, who need such information to remain loyal to the firm. Supposedly, firms induce classlessness and valued community-spirit amongst customers; they emphasize feelings and emotions, respects, courtesy, warmth, empathy and assistance amongst customers to the extent that proficient recovery experiences can be readily shared (Al-alak and Alnawas, 2010). Perceived mutuality of thoughts is encouraged within communities to ensure more customized recovery services (Hasouneh and Ayed Alqeed, 2010). The wide use of social media reduces the process of sharing recovery experiences real-time and cost-effectively.

### **Proposed behavioral adjustments**

All things being equal, resolving functional and cross-functional tensions is a company-wide affair demanding customer orientation and integration of complaint database and service dominant logic as well as balanced sub-cultural and socio-demographic differences and linking recovery with metrics and rewards and developing what Michel *et al.* (2009) refer to as T-shaped managers and employees (see table 3). The various strategies discussed earlier work in integrated form when adjustments are critically made in certain behavioral dimensions.

### **Work with service logic**

Service in the post-Fordist market fragmentation involves the application of specialized competencies (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of oneself and others (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Boellstorff (2008) posits that the Maussian, Kotlerite, Foucauldian and Marxian general intellect propose a network of productive social knowledge that reflects a fusion of competing social logics. This affirms scholarly (Arvidsson, 2007; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) expression of the need to re-theorize, to explain the contemporary complex networked organization, and to align Fordist epoch to complex and fragmented markets. An integrated process occurs where dynamic and fertile ecosystems and extended enterprise encourage disgusted customers to provide creative and localized ingenuities for mutual benefits (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). This suggests an extended convergence of revised exchange logic that

evolves continuous accords among core stakeholders/actors (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000) and confirms that marketing thought is moving from good-dominant (G-D) logic to service-dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Awa and Lebari (2015) observe that the S-D logic mobilizes communitarian dimensions, aligns with Mc-Donaldization, and repositions the market status-quo towards integrating and managing consumer independence in recovery. Such integrated interest dispels the myth of recovery programs based on the unilateral and intrinsic ingenuities of the provider (Laughy, 2010) and specifically addresses the issue of what customers wish to accomplish and why (consumer logic), the service outcome produced and why (process logic), and what employees are doing and why (employee logic). Abell (1978) posits that recovery business is defined in terms of the customer's ordeals as well as the instruments and technologies for delivering the recovery. Often addressing the service logic of the current service delivery system requires some bit of application of SOP1 model since the cross-functional recovery team resolves around the problem by integrating the tensions identified and by using blueprinting to guide customers to expose their service experiences and to assess possible competing logics (see Zeithaml *et al.*, 2005).

**Table 3:** Integrated service recovery

<b>Point of integration</b>	<b>Key ideas</b>	<b>Tools</b>
Service logic	Weave together answers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer logic –tapping from customers what they want to accomplish, and why?</li> <li>• Technical/process logic – the technology for producing service outcomes and why?</li> <li>• Employee logic- what employees do in the interest of customers, and why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service maps and SOP1 blueprints</li> <li>• Cross-functional teams</li> </ul>
Work on corporate culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align the interest of marketing, operations, and HRM subcultures with dominant corporate culture.</li> <li>• Fit differentiated culture maps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Cultural maps” of dominant and sub-cultures</li> <li>• Design of: espoused values, management practices, and cultural artifacts</li> </ul>
Strategy-driven recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic “fit” is the tie-breaker for resolution of competing tensions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specify contingencies, e.g., competitive environment, customer segments, and the specific resolution associated with each</li> </ul>
Information-based decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing to decide recovery strategy and tactics based upon data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement methods to collect—and share—<i>more</i> recovery information, <i>more widely</i></li> </ul>
Recovery-oriented performance management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizations tend to get what they measure and reward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced scorecard</li> <li>• Calculate “return on recovery”</li> <li>• Performance Management systems that reinforce subculture balance</li> </ul>
Integrate T-shaped staff and service science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees and managers must possess functional competence and capability to think cross-functionally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build into competency frameworks</li> <li>• See IBM Service Sciences Management and Engineering (SSME) initiative</li> </ul>

### ***Work on corporate culture***

Introduce a culture where ground-breaking and disappointing recovery experiences are shared, (re)emphasized in training programs and corporate conversations, and used to build competencies (via surged learning and experience curves). Further, differentiated culture maps of marketing, operations management, and human resources demand fit, alliance or acceptable tolerance in order to build competent recovery (Michel *et al.*, 2009). Marketing identifies possible service failures and their causes even before they are reported as well as how to deal with them to ensure post-complaint satisfaction; operations learn from the failure to ensure absence of re-occurrence; and human resource scientists use the theories of motivation and reinforcement and Thorndike's law of effect to ensure that pleasurable outcomes are repeated. Operations honours and rewards pleasurable behaviors but specifically to those officers whose actions clearly contribute to retaining active customers after service failure encounters. Maxham and Netemeyer (2002) propose when such values align and employees perceive themselves as contributing significantly to the life of the organization, they show commitment to corporate course required in failure and recovery situations. The task of recovering disgusted customers is quite challenging but employees who share the organization's core values are most likely to excel because of the achievement of goal congruence.

### ***Develop strategy-driven recovery***

Often recovery strategies are fleshed out to resolve and harmonize competing functional orientations, especially when tensions are procedurally-driven. Bowen and Lawler (1995) posit that the unpredictable state-of-nature demands differentiated and empowered employees who exploit customer relational ideals whereas in low-cost and high-volume scenario with standardized, routine, and predictable tasks and transactional paradigm, more procedurally-driven employees' action exists. For tensions between customer satisfaction and productivity, the relationships depend on the difference between standardization and customization. Anderson *et al.* (1997) observe that improvement in standardization surges productivity and satisfaction, whereas delightful recoveries decrease productivity and boost satisfaction because of tailor-made (e.g., serving customers differently) activities.

### ***Get and share information***

To make informed decisions to resolve interdisciplinary conflicts and reposition the competing views to the organization's benefit, information collected is shared to ensure employee empowerment and ability to see beyond the functional slice. Unfortunately, the database of many enterprises houses only a small fraction of failure information from customers, employees, and managers because many staff and disgusted customers are rarely encouraged adequately to register service ordeals and ensure they are made accessible within the community for service improvement initiatives. To improve upon database customer information, enterprises must handle the reality of unvoiced complaints and complaint-handling system (Andreasen and Best, 1977). Registering of disgusts generates through service guarantees (McCollough and Gremler, 2004), serves as incentives to customers in order to report service issues to management. Networking and sharing of service information in terms of their economic and social values facilitate employees' ability to see reality beyond functions as it provides opportunity to use firsthand experiences to build customer satisfaction and loyalty. Aside maintaining contact with customers before, during and after service encounters and using state-of-the-art software solutions (Singhal *et al.*, 2013; Stauss and Seidel, 2005), developers must make complaint processes soft, less cumbersome and time-saving. Bowen and Lawler (1995) propose that employee empowerment results from the entire exercise because of the existence of information, power, training, and rewards. Information defines expectancy confirmation/disconfirmation; power provides employees some discretion and leeway to respond to failures; training empowers employees with skills to spot fail-points from routine activities and customer feedback, and to proficiently lead customers through service failures (Spreng *et al.*, 1996); and rewards foster repeat behavior, accountability and performance-driven incentives.

### ***Work on rewards and performance***

The various theories of motivation and reinforcement emphasize using rewards to ensure meeting of the minds, and to achieve goal congruence amongst potentially competing interests; they use rewards and punishments (carrot and stick) to cause a repeat of pleasurable behavior and to dissuade unwanted work-related behavior. The theories provide balanced scorecard that aligns and optimizes multiple objectives by identifying competing objectives and establishing normative decision rules (Kaplan and Norton, 2004). Anderson *et al.* (1997) posit that management necessarily tracks this, given that productivity and customer satisfaction objectives correlate positively, negatively or not at all. However, the application of the theories to customer service management seems almost neglected given that studies by Gross *et al.* (2007) indicate that of 4000 respondents, only 41% of employees received compensation and only 36% got promoted based on customer

satisfaction ratings. To really recover disgusted customers, the reward structure should anchor on Fredrick Winslow Taylor's 'fair day's work for fair day's pay;' negative rewards for poor service recovery output (Stauss and Seidel, 2005) and positive rewards structure to employees who reduce the number of complaints by timely and proficiently pleasing the customers and resolving their ordeals (Hart *et al.*, 1990). However, the metrics used to design recovery performance rewards operate on subculture values and practices as well as business unit rewards that go for overall group performance. Zhu *et al.* (2005) advised that motivation and reinforcement should go to employees who:

- improve customer satisfaction at the expense of dissatisfaction (customer and employee recovery encounter);
- decrease service failures and impact on customer satisfaction through learning from mistakes as well as taking timely and proficient actions (process and employee recovery encounter);
- show track records of customer acquisition and customer retention measured by customer loyalty rates and decrease in lost businesses; and
- show signs of building strong customer lifetime value based on undisrupted loyalty, product support advice, and viral behavior (actions of the employees should spur positive, and less negative, conversations between customers and potential customers).

### ***Integrate T-shaped skills***

The July 2007 international symposium organized by IBM, Cambridge University's Institute for Manufacturing and BAE Systems identifies wide gaps in knowledge and skills across silos and thus, attempts to provide the theoretical service mindset that gives further insights into resolving the tensions associated with cross-functional disciplines. The symposium further affirms that bridging the gaps to deal with complex service systems indicates reassessing research and education approaches on the grounds of trans-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Service Science, Management and Engineering (SSME) is an emerging multi-disciplinary field that discovers the underlying logic of complex service systems and requires intensive collaboration across academic disciplines and doubling of R&D investment in service education and research. On this premise, T-shaped professionals expand the expert thinking skills of their parent discipline across other disciplines or functional areas, and develop systemic thinking and problem-solving skills (Lee and Choi, 2003; Johannessen *et al.*, 1999). Madhavan and Grover (1998) and Johannessen *et al.* (1999) opine that to effectively interpret and utilize novel and unfamiliar, complex and ambiguous knowledge, T-shaped skills meaningfully sustain conversations with other specialists and assist them (other specialists) to organize market and technical knowledge in a systemic way. T-shaped skills provide recovery team with a greater ability to comprehend a wide variety of new information and to integrate them with incumbent knowledge.

Worried about how a unified service system works without breaking down along disciplinary lines, IBM developed initiative leadership of academics and managers, who searches for service science applications to service delivery and recovery (Spohrer *et al.*, 2007; Michel *et al.*, 2009). The stakeholders engage one another, establish common language interactions and shared frameworks and plans for service innovation, and assume that improved service decisions are made by heterogeneous and integrated team rather than by homogeneous team. This is cost-effective with the advent ICT platforms (e.g., facebook, twitter, blogs, intranet, wikis, etc.) and their huge promises of real-time interactions and sharing of the expertise and experience of leading academics and practitioners in a non-linear way. The interaction may be front-office (customer interaction: how can customer satisfaction be ensured in the face of multiple customer touch points and contact channels?) and/or back-office (operational processes: how to improve productivity via skilled employees, streamlined processes and robust relationships with partners and suppliers) and both must match to guarantee the best overall performance. Theoretically, this approach provides detailed foundations upon which research and education advance; and practically, it develops rigorous methodologies to improve service systems and the design of high-value service offerings.

## **II. Conclusion**

Service failures are really inevitable; when they occur, the affected consumers show concern with respect to the provider's ingenuity and proficiency in mixing the ingredients of distributive, procedural, and interactional justices in efforts to address them and dissuade negative customer actions. However, many service failure factors abound but this paper traces their root to the interdisciplinary tensions amongst marketing, operations, and human relations and organizational behavior. Scholars (Davidow, 2003; Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002; Kim *et al.*, 2009; Johnston and Clark, 2008; Edmondson, 2011) believe that the yet unresolved tensions between the conflicting and diverse perspectives of customer, process, and employee recoveries is adversely affecting customer retention. Thus, the need for integrated and unified service systems that proficiently and synergistically mix and remix the cognate ingredients needed to reinstate disgusted

customers, enhance employee and customer satisfaction and loyalty, minimize failure rates and operating costs, and ultimately improved overall profitability. A unified service system or dynamic configurations of people, technologies, organizations and shared information creates and delivers value to customers, providers, and other stakeholders. Service recovery is a critical component of corporate reputation and so, integrative recovery re-establishes post-recovery satisfaction (customer recovery), encourages learning from mistakes to improve operations (process recovery), and trains, educates, and rewards employees to retain pleasurable behavior (employee recovery). Specific tensions are evidenced within employee and process recovery, customer and process recovery, and employee and customer recovery and effective management of such tensions involves implementing integrated programs based on service logic, corporate culture, information sharing, reward schemes, value and strategy-driven recovery, and T-shaped service sciences. At the end, the intention is to douse the effect of functional diversity on recovery operations and to develop a system whereby information is shared real-time to create values to all stakeholders within the organization.

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