THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED JUSTICE ON SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN MALAYSIA TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

WENDY PRIMUS

PERPUSTAKAAN UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA SABAH 2013



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WENDY PRIMUS

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15th August 2013

Wendy Primus

PE20117041C



CERTIFICATION

NAME : WENDY PRIMUS

MATRIC NO. : **PE20117041C**

TITLE : THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED JUSTICE ON

SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN

MALAYSIA TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

DEGREE : MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

VIVA DATE : 28TH AUGUST 2013

DECLARED BY

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

Dr. Stephen L. Sondoh



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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED JUSTICE ON SATISFACTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN MALAYSIA TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of perceived justice on customer loyalty and to examine the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between perceived justice and customer loyalty. It examines the perception of "Justice" in the service recovery and how it affects customer loyalty and the level of satisfaction specifically in the Telecommunication Industry. A total of 281 respondents were participated in the data collections and data was collected through a survey from mobile telephone users in Malaysia particularly in the area of Kota Kinabalu. The results show that the effects of distributive justice, interactional justice and informational on customer loyalty were significant. Procedural justice and listening and timing justice were found to be insignificant to customer loyalty. Satisfaction as the mediator variable included to examine the relationship between perceived justice and customer loyalty shows that distributive justice are fully mediated and interactional justice and informational justice were found partially mediated to customer loyalty. The insignificant influences of procedural justice and listening and timing justice on satisfaction and customer loyalty are found to be issues needed to be highlighted and to be proposed for in-depth study. The results of this study shows the importance of perceived justice in service recovery and satisfaction in service recovery leads to high level of loyalty intension to deliver more effective and efficient service recovery strategies and enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction.



ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menilaikesan keadilan yang dilihat pada kesetiaan pelanggan dan untuk mengkaji peranan pengantara kepuasan dalam hubungan antara keadilan dilihat dan kesetiaan pelanggan. Ia mengkaji persepsi "Justice" dalam pemulihan perkhidmatan dan bagaimana ia memberikesan kepada kesetian pelangan dan tahap kepuasan khususnya dalam Industri Telekomunikasi. Seramai 281 responden telah mengambil bahagian di dalam pengumpulan data dan data yang telah dikumpulkan melalui kaji selidik daripada pengguna telefon mudah alih di Malaysia, terutamanya di kawasan Kota Kinabalu. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kesan pengedaran keadilan, keadilan interak sidan maklumat pada kesetiaan pelanggan adalah penting. Keadilan prosedur dan mendengar dan keadilan masa didapati tidak penting. Kepuasan sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara termasuk untuk mengkaji hubungan antara keadilan dilihat dan kesetiaan pelanggan menunjukkan bahawa keadilan pengedaran adalah pengantara sepenuhny adan interaksi keadilan dan maklumat keadilan didapati sebahagiannya diselesaikan kepada kesetiaan pelanggan. Pengaruh tidak signifikan dalam prosedur keadilan, keadilan pendengaran dan masa didalam kepuasan pengguna dan juga kesetiaan pengguna didapati menjadi isu-isu yang perlu diperjelaskan dan dicadangkan untuk kajian yang lebih mendalam. Hasil kajian menunjukkan kepentingan tanggapan keadilan dalam pemulihan perkhidmatan disamping betapa pentingnya tanggapan keadilan dalam pemulihan perkhidmatan disamping juga kepuasan dalam pemulihan perkhidmatan. Ini kerana ia akan membawa kepada tahap kesetiaan yang tinggi dalam menyampaikan strategi pemulihan perkhidmatan yang lebih efektif dan cekap seterusnya ia dapat meningkatkan kesetiaan dan kepuasan pengguna.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In today's every changing business environment, customer service requests are more complex and, at the same time demands for instant gratification are higher (Eccentex Corporation, 2011). Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002) highlighted that customer complaint cannot be eliminate, but can be learned to effectively respond to them. Service provider's responds on service failures occurs, can either create a strong customer bond, or changed from minor distraction into a major incident (Hoffman, Kelley & Rotalsky, 1995). Blodgett, Hill and Tax (1997) mentioned that, the increasing of competitive markets have shown the importance of sustaining loyalty and to develop long-term relationships with existing customers. In consistent with other researchers, Smith, Bolton and Wagner (1999) highlighted that organizations are facing a strong pressure especially in customer service than before, because of new entrant in the market that offering competitive offers to attract customers. In the service recovery context, organization's responses towards customer's complaint is crucial either to bring back customer's satisfaction and regain loyalty or to exasperate customers that leads to a competing firm.

Consumer nowadays were all well informed of rights they have which encourage in seeking for better service quality from the service provider. Complaints can be in various forms of expressions where customer's main objective is to let the service provider or organization's representative able to listen to them and provide them fair and just solutions to the problem they were facing. Complaining options include seeking redress, engaging in negative word of mouth, exiting, and contracting third parties (Boldgett *et al.*, 1997). Service failures and service recoveries analysis is important and beneficial to service organizations, the analysis outcome enables the management to identify common failure situations and to formulate strategies in handling service failure that may occur in the future (Hoffman *et al.*, 1995).



Chang, Lee and Tseng (2008) defined that service failures may upset and disappoint customers, but failure that were immediately and effectively addressed will gain customer's loyalty and satisfaction where else service failures that is not being handled immediately and effectively is surely to arouse dissatisfaction and switching intention. Studies in the cost of defections and strategy implementation in the reduction of service failure occurrence are an element of quality improvement programs (Boldgett *et al.*, 1997). According to Hoffman and Kelley (2000), customers may exit to the competition for numerous reasons believing that inappropriate responses to service failures will significantly increases the firm's switching rate.

Ultimately, dissatisfaction will eventually lead to negative actions and outcomes that these customers may react in order to express their dissatisfaction. As customers were aware of their rights, it has encouraged them to voice out to friends or relatives about their experience of dissatisfied or lodging official complaints to the service providers to express their dissatisfaction towards the service failures. Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg (2003) highlighted that anger and dissatisfaction can be caused by many events such as waiting time for service to be activated or normalized, dealing with unresponsive or impolite personnel, and core service failures. In consistent with Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002) study, perceptions regarding recovery processes are best handled directly after customers experience failures in the service they had used rather than prolonging the waiting time to recover the failures.

Customer satisfaction is important to the business survival (Kau & Loh, 2006). Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002) mentioned that implicit promise of fairness is salient, systematically categorizing customer complaint (Hoffman *et al.*, 1995) will help the provider to handle and manage complaint because complaint represent an opportunity to rectify related problems to the products or services and also to positively influence the behavior of customer (Blodgett *et al.*, 1997). In the telecommunication industry, customer loyalty (Dekimpe, Steenkamp, Mellens & Abeele, 1997) is the most crucial element that one service provider needed to gain because it is the key success of the telecommunication company to maintain a long



term relationship between the subscriber and the service provider (Aydin & Ozer, 2005). Disloyal customer may results to millions of revenue and profit lost where customer switched to other service provider (Aydin & Ozer, 2005). Resources obtain from a telecommunication company showing the total number of network complaints lodged through the call center in the state of Sabah from the year 2008 until 2012. The total numbers in the figure below shows that mobile subscriber in Malaysia, particularly in the state of Sabah responded to the service failures specifically related to network failure. The figure below shows the trending of complaint made by mobile telephone users in the state.

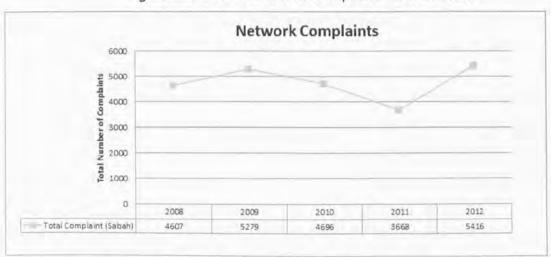


Figure 1.0: Total Number of Complaint – Sabah State

Source: Celcom Axiata Berhad (2013). VOC Complaint Report – Network Performance

According to MCMC Licensed Company Malaysia (2012), Malaysia will be expecting an increment of 41.9 million mobile subscribers in the year 2013 from 27.1 million in the year 2008. Increment of mobile subscribers from the report given by the commission, shows that it is important for the telecommunication operators in Malaysia to understand the compliant trending of their customers in response towards service failures, understanding the trend is crucial for the operator to develop effective business strategies and strategic actions in managing good customer relationship, satisfy customer and gaining customer loyalty (Nimako & Mensah, 2012). Eventually when the number of subscriber increases have



significant of increment in the number of complaint received from customers. Malaysia currently have fairly young population which is growing rapidly fast with the higher demand of telecommunications usage has seen the contribution towards the country's economic (Malaysian-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, n.d.).

Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC, 2012) announced the content industry development as an important catalyst in the development of the country's communications and multimedia industry which leads towards the economy growth in the future. According to the annual report, revenue reported from the communications industry had increase by 11% from RM41.2 billion in 2009 to RM45.8 billion in 2010. In the same year, domestic revenue is reported at RM35.4 billion and represented 6.3% of the country Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 8.9% of the Gross National Product (GNP). With such high contributions, programs for the development of the telecommunication industry were actively introduced to provide a better infrastructure for the country's telecommunication (i.e. Long Term Evolution (LTE) Technology, Antenna and Propagation Theory to Practice, Fundamental of Satellite Communication and Hybrid Optical and Wireless Technologies for Next Generation Applications).

Thus, this study aims is to use an social exchange theory-base used by (Kau & Loh, 2006) in understanding of consumer's perceptions towards the service failure and service recovery efforts of the service provider in the context of telecommunication industry. In addition, this study also aims to examine a research model of Nikbin, Ismail, Marimuthu and Armesh (2012) on the perceived of justice in service recovery on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The usage of mobile is increasing in Malaysia yearly with the effort of the local government together with Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and major telecommunication operators to expands the coverage in major cities and as well as in the rural area in providing the best network coverage and service experience. Therefore it is important for the management of mobile



telecommunication operators to understand the purposes a complaint was make by the customers (Nimako & Mensah, 2012). Moreover, Yi and Gong (2008) mentioned in order to improve the competiveness in the industry, service provider had begun to pay great attentions to their customer's voice.

Metehan and Yasemin (2011) highlighted that it is of strategic importance for firms to solve customer complaints rapidly and efficiently. In ensuring satisfaction on the service recovery, procedures and actions apply and deployments of skilled personnel are crucial in handling customer complaint (Kau & Loh, 2006). Mostert, De Meyer and van Rensburg (2009) mentioned that service failures and the subsequent service recovery efforts of an organization can have a profound effect on customers' satisfaction with an organization as well as on the quality of the relationship to build long-term relationships with its customers.

Service providers in the telecommunication industry taking all efforts to fulfill customer needs for greater customer's satisfaction towards the service provided and offered by the service provider. Complaint channels make the process of lodging complaint easily by the mobile telecommunication companies (Nimako, 2012). As mentioned earlier, service failures and service recovery affects customer's experience of the service experience that one service provider had to offer. Complaints arise when customers feels upset by service failures and fail to handle effectively towards the service failures is sure to cause dissatisfaction (Chang et al., 2008). Hoffman and Kelley (2000), pointed that limited research found specifically examining the influence of perceived justice on service failure and recovery. Boldgett et al., (1997), addressed that limited effort had been expended in developing a theoretical understanding of how different dimensions of justice effects on consumers' post-complaint behavior after experiencing service failure and service recovery. Moreover, few studies on the perceived of justice been done to examine the relationship and effects in an eastern cultural especially in the telecommunication industry in Malaysia context and lack of empirical studies in that including the fourth dimension of perceived justice (i.e. informational justice) in examining the relationship of satisfaction in the service industry (Nikbin et al., 2012). Not many studies were done with the present of the informational justice



especially in the service marketing research and study and lack of investigation done on the framework in all service failure situations (Mattila & Cranage, 2005; Mattila, 2006; Nikbin, Ismail & Marimuthu, 2012).

It is important to quickly to address the reason of service failed to be delivered to the mobile telephone users. Hoffman *et al.*, (1995), mentioned that when service failures occur, service provider's responds on service failures occurrences, can either create a strong customer bond, or changed from minor disturbance into a major defection. The usage of telephone had increase day by day with all the services provided by the telecommunication companies and as well as with the introductions of attractive plans tied up with latest smartphones. Understanding the customer complaint behavior is crucial for companies to ensure the level of satisfaction. Hoffman *et al.*, (1995) highlighted that service failures and service recoveries analysis is important and beneficial to service organizations, the analysis outcome enables the management to identify common failure situations and to formulate strategies in handling service failure that may occur in the future. Moreover, service recovery is a process whereby series of actions needed to be taken as a result from dissatisfy customer perception of initial service failure delivery (Kau & Loh, 2006).

Customer responses towards service recovery are determined of perceived justice. Perceived justice is commonly referring to fairness of the results that the customer's expecting to receive from the service provider. Hoffman and Kelley (2000) highlighted perceived of justice suggested, it is the recoveries itself; the outcomes which connected to the strategies; and the interpersonal behaviors that presented during the recovery process and outcomes delivering.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research main question is to find out the effects of perceived justice on satisfactions and customer loyalty in Malaysia telecommunication industry specifically in the Kota Kinabalu area. This question will then leads to several research questions as follows:



- A. Does perceived justice have a positive relationship with satisfaction?
- B. Does satisfaction have a positive relationship with customer loyalty?
- C. Does perceived justice have a positive relationship with customer loyalty?
- D. To what extent is the relationship between perceived justice and customer loyalty mediated by satisfaction?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- A. To examine the effects of perceived justice on customer satisfactions.
- B. To examine the effects of satisfaction on customer loyalty
- C. To examine the effects of perceived justice on customer loyalty
- To examine the mediating effects of satisfaction on the relationship between perceived justice and satisfaction

1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

Telecommunication is an important medium in communicating between people across nations to shorten the gap of distance. Growth in telecommunication industry is visible through the extension and introductions of variety of product, services and packages to attract existing and new customers. Challenges faced by these telecommunication providers as the market started to growth according to the introductions of various technologies. Therefore, this research is aim to conduct an in-depth study of the Malaysian mobile telecommunication customer's perceived of justice towards the service recovery in addition to examine the relationship between satisfaction and customer's behavior towards the recovery stage. This study mainly aims and target to gather information through questionnaires on customers whom have experienced service failure and service recovery and had mad complaint to the service provider in the area of Kota Kinabalu city.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The finding of this study is to provide better understanding of perceived justice values (i.e distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice and



informational justice) among the mobile customers towards the experience of service failure and recovery especially in the context of Malaysia. The objective of this study, is believe that could contribute towards the knowledge on customers perceived of justice relating with satisfaction and customers behavioral (i.e. customer loyalty with the intention to stay) especially in the telecommunication industry to the service providers to better understand the customer's level of satisfaction after the service recovery take place.

Outcome in behavioral is worth taking notes especially in the context of service industry in ensuring to maintain the bond between the service provider and existing customers through the level of satisfaction perceived by the customers. Behavioral can be categorized in two types, negative or positive. It is known that positive behavior exhibited will benefit the provider where else negative behavior will result in defections. Therefore, this study is important in providing valuable information to the service provider of telecommunication in sustaining a good relationship with the customer even after service failure occurred with justice treatment given during the process of service recovery by satisfying the customers.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF TERM

The definition of terminologies used in this study is as below:

PERCEIVED JUSTICE

Perceived Justice is defined defined that perceived justice especially in the service recovery where it connected to the outcomes from the recovery strategies along with the interpersonal behaviours that portray during the process of recovery with delivery of outcomes. (Hoffman & Kelley, 2000).

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Distributive Justice is defined as perceived fairness of the tangible outcome of a dispute, negotiation, or decision involving two or more parties (Boldgett *et al.*, 1997).



PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

Procedural justice defined as the perceived fairness on the policies and standards of procedures used as the guidelines for the service provider to make decisions in the early studies by Greenberg (1990).

INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE

Interactional Justice is defined as the mode in which the recovery process is operationalized and recovery outcomes presented (Kau & Loh, 2006).

INFORMATIONAL JUSTICE

Express of favouritism feelings towards the information received in an effort to gain understanding about the cause of service failure and to assists in getting a fair and quick solution at the end of the process (Tax, Brown & Chandrashekaran, 1998).

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty is defined as a commitment shown by customer towards an organization with a continuous of support and backup to the same service provider (Kau & Loh, 2006)

SATISFACTION

Satisfaction is defined as the customer's overall feeling towards the service provider in the end result of an event (Davidow, 2000).

SERVICE RECOVERY

Service recovery is defined as responses and action taken by the provider towards service failure (Gronroos, 1988).

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

This report consists of five chapters. Chapter one provides the overview of the significance of the study in perceived justice on customer's loyalty with the mediating effects of satisfaction in the context of mobile telecommunication industry. Research problems highlighted in this chapter to bridge the gaps mentioned by researchers to further extend the study. Follow by the research



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