64 Antecedents and Moderators of Customer Online Revenge Intentions: A Cross-Cultural Examination

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Recent research has shown that unhappy customers could seek revenge against firms through public expressions of their dissatisfaction and anger (Haj-Salem and Chebat 2014; Tripp and Gregoire 2011). With greater sources for venting offered by the Internet and social media, it has been found that consumer revenge behaviors may range from simple status updates on Twitter and Facebook to posts on consumer websites (e.g., consumerrevenge.com) to more focused anti-firm videos on YouTube and other media. Such public online revenge is not only a huge challenge to the public relations campaigns of firms but also results in direct and indirect costs to the company, along with the possibility of long-term damage to the company's brand image and reputation (Tripp and Gregoire 2011). Recently, it has been shown that consumer revenge intentions and behaviors are more predominant when initial the initial service failure is not appropriately recovered by the firm. Dubbed “double deviation,” consumer revenge often follows the exasperation and anger not only the dissatisfaction of the initial service failure but also from the consumer’s failure attempts to seek redress from the company (Joireman et al. 2013). Since extent research on consumer revenge behaviour is still in its infancy, we seek to extend the current state of knowledge by pursuing the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of the type and severity of service failure on consumer revenge intentions?

2. What is the impact of consumer cognitive appraisal of the service failure on revenge intentions?

3. Do perceived control, perceived risk and expectancy of reach moderate the relationship between consumer intentions and actual revenge behaviors?

4. Are there cross-cultural differences in consumer perceptions and revenge intentions?

Methodology and Key Findings

The model of antecedents and moderators was tested using a sample of 200 respondents from the UK and 217 from Jordan. The findings demonstrate the influence of culture on consumers cognitive, emotional, and behavioural outcomes. Culture was found to be a primary influence on the way consumers responded to different types of service failures. Jordanian consumers appreciated good service interactions more than the outcome of this service and were more likely to commit online revenge after a process failure. On the other hand, subjects in the U.K. were more interested in the outcome of the service and were more likely to commit online revenge after an outcome failure. Jordanian consumers were more sensitive to threats to their ego involvement and were more ego-involved than consumers in the U.K. Severity of the service failure appeared to be significant only for the English sample which provides support to previous findings that consumers from collectivistic societies are more tolerant in viewing service failures than those in individualistic societies (Zourrig, Chebat, and Toffoli, 2009).

Another important finding was examination of the roles of control, risk, and the expectancy of reach on online revenge. For the U.K. sample, these factors were found to influence online revenge in both process and outcome failures situations. However, for the Jordan sample, the influence of these factors was significant only in a process failure situation. This may be indicative of U.K. consumers’ more careful evaluation of how to transform their desire for online
revenge into actual revenge behavior. On the other hand, Jordanian consumers appeared to be more emotionally driven and commit to online revenge without much thought.

Conclusion and Contributions

One primary contributions of this study is the test of a comprehensive model of online consumer revenge in two somewhat opposing cultural contexts. A test of appropriate antecedents and moderators enables us to understand the growing phenomenon of online consumer revenge and make suitable managerial and theoretical recommendations. Specifically, we demonstrate the conditions under which service failures could exacerbate into deeper consumer reactions, such as revenge. Moreover, by studying the link between consumer revenge intentions and actual revenge behaviors, we are able to offer recommendations on how firms could development suitable intervention strategies that placate unhappy consumers and also limit the extensive damage that could otherwise be caused by online revenge.

Select References


