

When Alienated Consumers Reconsider: The Role of Recovery Effort in Forgiveness and Justice Perceptions

Harsh Kumar^{*} and Ashish Bajpai
Institute of Management Studies
Banaras Hindu University

Abstract: Unfair service experiences often lead to negative reactions, but consumers do not always withdraw right away. This study examines how consumers rethink unfair service encounters by focusing on consumer alienation, recovery effort, forgiveness, and fairness perceptions. Using survey data from 482 restaurant customers, the findings show that consumers who feel alienated pay more attention to how the firm responds after a problem. Strong recovery efforts reduce feelings of unfairness and increase consumers' willingness to forgive. The results also show that recovery effort explains how alienation affects both forgiveness and fairness judgments. Overall, the study shows that well-handled recovery efforts can turn negative service experiences into more positive evaluations and help repair service relationships after unfair treatment.

Keywords: Consumer Alienation, Service Recovery, Consumer Forgiveness, Service Experiences, Restaurant Services

JEL Classification Number: M31, L83, D63, D91

^{*}Corresponding author. Email: harshkumar@fmsbhu.ac.in

Acknowledgement: The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable guidance and continued support of Prof. Ashish Bajpai and the faculty members of the Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University. The author also extends sincere thanks to fellow research scholars and well-wishers for their constant encouragement throughout the study. Special appreciation is extended to the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) for providing financial support through the Doctoral Fellowship (ICSSR/RFD/24-25/MGT/SC/345).