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Exploring the Relationship Between Personality Factors and
Consumer Expectations of Recovery Following Service Failure

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Abstract

Perfect service is never one hundred percent guaranteed; there is always the possibility of failure. When these failures occur, it is expected by the customer that the service organization will provide compensation through some type of service recovery effort. This study proposes that customers' expectations of how the company will recover from failure may be influenced by the customers' underlying personality characteristics. Participants, who completed a personality scale, were shown several service failure scenarios and were asked to indicate, for each scenario, what they expected the service organization to do in response to the failure. The results were analyzed using a chi square test. It was demonstrated that there were no significant relationships between personality characteristics and consumers' expectations of recovery following service failure.

Exploring the Relationship Between Personality Factors and
Consumer Expectations of Recovery Following Service Failure

The economy of the United States is currently shifting from one based on the manufacture of goods to one based on the provision of services (Bowen & Schneider, 1988). Thus, in order for companies to be competitive in the new service-oriented economy, they must focus on delivering high quality service to their customers. Almost all customers understand that service firms are not perfect—that failures in service delivery do occur. However, most customers who have experienced a service failure expect the service firm to try and make amends for the costs the customers might incur as a result of such a failure. It is important for organizations to examine and understand the expectations that customers have for service recovery because service recovery is only successful to the extent that the firm meets or exceeds these expectations (Bell & Zemke, 1985; Hart, Heskett, & Sasser, 1990; Johnston, 1995; Kelley & Davis, 1994). While a number of researchers have examined customer's general expectations for overall service quality (Bell & Zemke, 1985; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Johnston, 1995; Kelley & Davis, 1994), few studies have been done which have explored customers' specific expectations for recovery following a service failure. The purpose of the present research is to examine some underlying factors which may influence customers' expectations of service recovery. Specifically, we propose that personality factors of individual customers are related to their expectations of service recovery efforts.

The Nature of Services, Service Failure, and Service Recovery

Services versus goods. While services and goods do share certain characteristics, it is important to outline those features which differentiate one from the other. A number of authors have described three major features which distinguish services from goods (Bowen & Schneider,

1988; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985). First, services are relatively intangible. The organization performs some sort of service. For example, when people bring their automobile to a mechanic, the mechanic repairs the automobile but does not actually provide the customers with something they can touch. Second, services tend to be produced and consumed at the same time. For example, a mechanic tells a customer what is wrong, the mechanic corrects the problem, and the repaired automobile is brought home. The customer never receives any goods, but accepts the car as fixed by the mechanic. Finally, customers often tend to be involved in the production and delivery of the service. Customers must interact with the organization by telling the company what service needs to be performed.

Failures in service delivery. The delivery of services to customers is never perfect. For example, in a restaurant your food may arrive cold, your hair stylist may cut your hair too short or use too much dye, or your automobile mechanic may not fix that clanking sound coming from your motor. In any case, customers must be aware that failures are inevitable (Bell & Zemke, 1987; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hart et al., 1990; Johnston, 1995; Kelley & Davis, 1994). Service failure can be defined as a situation where the result of the service delivered is less than what the customer expected it to be (Hart et al., 1990). In other words, if a customer expects that his flight will arrive on time and in reality it leaves one half hour late, a service failure has occurred.

Not all service failures are equal. Some failures are viewed as being more detrimental than others (Kelley & Davis, 1994). Bell and Zemke (1987) made an interesting distinction between service failures which vary in terms of seriousness. The authors noted that some failures result in customers feeling annoyed (i.e., bothered and put out of their way) while other failures result in customers who feel victimized (i.e., very upset and defeated). When the service failure creates relatively minor setbacks for the customer, the customer may feel annoyed. For example, a hair

stylist cuts your relatively long hair one inch too short. On the other hand, a customer is likely to feel victimized when the service failure creates extreme hardships and/or major inconveniences for him/her. For example, your hair stylist misunderstands your request for a trim due to the loud whine of hairdryers and gives you a crew cut one hour before an important meeting.

To summarize, service failures do occur. Furthermore, the most frequent consequence of service failure is the generation of feelings of annoyance or victimization in the customer. However, such negative feelings can be overcome, and even reversed, if the service organization makes an effort to recover from the failure. In fact, a number of researchers have noted that strong recovery efforts can actually result in an increase in customers' levels of satisfaction, over and above the level of satisfaction which existed prior to the actual failure (Bell & Zemke, 1987; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hart et al., 1990; Johnston, 1995).

Recovery from service failure. Recovery involves the actions a company performs in response to a service failure (Bell & Zemke, 1987; Hart et al., 1990; Johnston, 1995; Kelley & Davis, 1994). For example, when a restaurant customer is given the wrong entrée (service failure), the customer is given an apology and the correct entrée is quickly delivered (service recovery). Actions such as these can restore normal service and compensate for the failure. Bell and Zemke (1987) offered several typical recovery techniques. The techniques are as follows: apology, urgent reinstatement (periodically reminding the customer that the service organization is working on getting the problem solved), empathy (relating to the customer), symbolic atonement (providing a symbol or gesture of sorrow in response to the service failure), and follow-up (making certain that the customer is satisfied). The authors claim that not all of these are necessary for every service recovery effort, however. They note that the first two are needed when the customer is annoyed whereas all five may be needed when the customer is feeling victimized.

It is important to note, however, that recovering from failure using techniques such as these is successful only if restoration is made to a customer's expectations and beliefs. Thus, a customer's expectations for service recovery play a critical role in the process. Boulding et al. (1993) presented two types of expectations that a customer has: "will" expectations and "should" expectations. "Will" expectations involve the actions that the customer thinks the company is going to do in order to make restoration. For example, based on word-of-mouth, a customer knows that a certain restaurant will offer a free drink if the meal ordered is incorrect. "Should" expectations involve the actions that the customer would want the company to do, in an ideal sense, to reconcile for lost time, money, effort, etc., the customer experiences due to service failure. For example, a customer may not only expect that free drink, but may also want a discount on the total price of the meal. We know that both of these kinds of expectations play a role in the service recovery process and that most researchers believe that both "will" and "should" expectations are influenced by prior experiences such as those with the service organization and/or a competitor, word-of-mouth, advertising, and so on (Boulding et al., 1993; Kelley & Davis, 1994). But, because "will" expectations and "should" expectations are qualitatively different, it is reasonable to assume that one, more than the other, may be affected by other sources besides prior experiences. Because "will" expectations are reality-based, these are thought to be affected by prior experience only. That is, "will" expectations are based on the knowledge a customer has of a company's policies and procedures for handling service failure and this knowledge stems from prior experiences such as word-of-mouth, personal experiences, and so on. "Should" expectations, on the other hand, are also anchored in the knowledge of the company's policies and procedures, but are not limited to this. In addition to this knowledge (derived from prior experiences), "should" expectations are also partly a function of the individual

customer's belief systems, values, and dispositions/traits (Boulding et al., 1993). Therefore, it is suggested that the "should" expectations, rather than the "will" expectations, are affected by another source, specifically individual personality characteristics.

The main thesis of this research effort is to explore the relationship between customers' personality characteristics and their expectations for service recovery. It is reasonable to assume that personality might be related to customers' "should" expectations because personality has been shown to be related to other cognitions. For example, Barrett and Pietromonaco (1997) linked personality characteristics to individual perceptions of social interactions. It was also found by Langston and Sykes (1997) that personality was related to peoples' beliefs about themselves and their social climate. If, as this previous research indicates, personality is related to cognitions in general, then it should be related to more specific cognitions, such as the expectations one formulates for what a service firm must do to recover from a service failure.

In summary, there are two types of expectations ("will" and "should") and both are likely to be influenced by prior experiences. It is also suggested that one type, "should" expectations, are influenced by something else as well. Because expectations are specific cognitions, it is hypothesized that personality factors (which are known to influence cognitions) are related to the expectations of service recovery. More specifically, it is hypothesized that personality factors will be more strongly related to "should" expectations than to "will" expectations. This is based on the understanding that while "will" expectations are grounded in reality-based reasoning (i.e., word-of-mouth, advertising, past experiences), "should" expectations are a function of the individual customer's values, beliefs, and dispositions. Thus, personality characteristics should be more strongly related to "should" expectations which are generated, at least in part, by more idealized reasoning and enduring characteristics.

A Note on Personality

The present study conceptualizes personality characteristics as the Big Five Personality Factors, an organization of different personality characteristics under five main dimensions (McCrae & John, 1992). These factors are Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. The first concept, Extraversion, is marked by high levels of activity, being assertive, full of energy, enthusiasm, talkative, and very outgoing. Second is Agreeableness and it is marked by being very forgiving, trustworthy, gentle, sympathetic, and generous. Conscientiousness, the third dimension, describes people who are efficient, reliable, responsible, and organized. The fourth factor, Neuroticism, is defined by characteristics such as being unstable, anxious, tense, and touchy. Finally, Openness to Experience is marked by artistic ability, curiosity, imagination, insightfulness, and originality. Many researchers in organizational psychology have successfully utilized the five-factor framework, further examining personality as either predictor or criterion (Cellar, Miller, Doverspike, & Klawnsky, 1996; Cortina, Doherty, Schmitt, Kaufman, & Smith, 1992; Inwald & Brockwell, 1991; Piedmont & Weinstein, 1994; Salgado, 1997; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991).

The current study will examine the relationship between each of the Big Five dimensions and customers' "will" and "should" expectations for service recovery. The main hypothesis of this study is that at least some personality characteristics will be more strongly related to "should" expectations of service recovery than to "will" expectations. Insufficient research and theory exists to facilitate the formulation of specific hypothesis linking individual personality dimensions to specific expectations of service recovery. Therefore, this study will take an exploratory approach in linking specific personality traits/dimensions to service recovery expectations.

Method

Overview

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between personality characteristics and customer expectations for service recovery. Specifically, the relationship between personality characteristics and the “will” expectations and the “should” expectations will be looked at. This will be accomplished through chi square tests between the scores on a measure of the Big Five Personality Factors and the results of the categorization of “will” and “should” expectations for service recovery following service failure.

In order to gain this information, several types of data need to be collected. First, the participants will be asked to read several scenarios that describe service encounters where a failure occurs. Then the participants will be asked to indicate in open-ended questions what their expectations (both “will” and “should”) would be regarding service recovery. A content analysis will be performed to convert the qualitative responses to the open-ended questions to data points that are quantitative in form. The results of the content analysis will be compared to scores on a standardized personality measure.

Prior to conducting the main study, one of the key issues that needs to be addressed concerns the severity of the service failure. It is possible that severity of the service failure could become a confound, affecting expectations regardless of the impact of personality characteristics. This was suggested by Bell and Zemke (1987). These authors stated that less severe service failures leave the customers feeling annoyed (i.e., bothered and put out of the way). More severe service failures result in the customers feeling victimized (i.e., very upset and defeated). The authors note that customers who are victimized need more in terms of recovery efforts than do annoyed customers. In other words, the way a customer feels about the service failure and their

expectations for recovery may be influenced by the level of severity of the failure. Therefore, a pilot study was conducted, the purpose of which was to determine the severity of various failures that might be included in the written scenarios used in the main study. The ultimate goal of the pilot study was to generate several service failures of equal severity which were then used in the main study.

Pilot Study

The goal of the pilot study was to gather data determining the severity of various service failures so that that information could be utilized to equate scenarios used in the main study on the variable of service failure severity.

Participants. 20 undergraduate students, both male and female, at Louisiana State University participated in the pilot study.

Procedure. Participants were given a survey which contained four general service scenarios: a restaurant, an automobile repair shop, a hair salon/barber shop, and an airline (see Appendix A). These particular service scenarios were chosen because they were deemed to be relatively familiar to the participants. Following each scenario was a list of potential service failures relevant to the scenario. Participants were asked to indicate the severity of each failure on a seven-point Likert-type scale (where 1 was “least severe” and 7 was “most severe”).

Data Analysis. In order to identify the specific failures which were to be utilized in the main study, the means of the ratings for each failure was examined. Only moderate failures (those with means closest to 4.00) were retained for use in the main study. The four service failures chosen had means of 4.10 for the restaurant and the automobile mechanic, 3.90 for the hair salon/barbershop, and 3.95 for the airline. The service failures incorporated were: “Even though you made the reservation, you end up having to wait for 30 minutes to be seated” (for the

restaurant scenario), “However, the mechanic calls and explains that when he was repairing your car, he accidentally dropped a bolt in the dashboard. He must then remove the dashboard, keeping your car in the shop for an extra day although he doesn’t charge you for it” (for the automobile repair shop scenario), “After the stylish/barber cuts your hair, she/he neglects to brush the cut hair off of your face and neck, making your skin feel itchy” (for the hair salon/barbershop scenario), and “When you booked your reservation, the travel agent assured you that you would have an aisle seat, but once you board the plane, you discover that you are in the middle seat” (for the airline scenario).

Main Study

Participants. The participants in this study were 85 undergraduate students at Louisiana State University. Of these participants, 16 were male and 69 were female. The ages ranged from 18 to 35 years.

Measures. Two measures were utilized in this study: a personality scale and a service failure scenario scale. The personality scale was a 40-item measure developed by Saucier (1994). It contains eight adjectives for each of the Big Five factors. On this scale participants are asked to describe themselves in terms of these 40 traits. This is accomplished by a nine-point Likert-type scale ranging from extremely inaccurate to extremely accurate. This scale, shown as Appendix B, is derived from Goldberg’s 1992 unipolar Big Five markers and differs from other Big Five measures in that it is shorter and its items are easier to answer (Saucier, 1994). Thus, it is more user-friendly and requires less time to complete. Saucier (1994) reported mean inter-scale correlations of .18, .10, .11, and .07.

The service failure scenario scale, presented as Appendix C, consisted of four profiles, each describing a different service encounter—scenarios in a restaurant, automobile repair shop,

hair salon/barber shop, and airline. Each scenario describes the occurrence of a moderately severe service failure as determined by the pilot study. When the participants received the service failure scenario scale, they were instructed to read the scenario. After doing so, the participants were asked to answer two open-ended questions: what do they think the service organization will do as a result of the service failure, and what do they think the service organization should do following the service failure.

Procedure. All of the participants were given both of the measures in a group setting. One fourth of the participants were given the personality scale first followed by the service failure scenario scale where the “will” questions were asked before the “should” questions. Another fourth of the sample were given the personality scale first , but the “should” questions were asked before the “will” questions. The second half were given the service failure scenario scale first (one half of this group were given the “will” questions first and the other half were given the “should” questions first) followed by the personality scale. All of the participants signed an informed consent and were debriefed afterward.

Data analysis. In order to analyze the data obtained from the service failure scenario scale, a content analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions was conducted first. Content analysis concerns the categorization of qualitative information (derived from written or oral materials) into quantitative data that can be analyzed statistically (Kerlinger, 1986; Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992; Weber, 1990). The utilization of this technique was necessary in this study in order to transform the responses in the open-ended questions into data that could be compared with the scores from the personality scale.

To perform the content analysis, the following steps were taken. First, an a priori set of categories had to be derived so that the responses to the open-ended questions could be sorted and

quantified. Initially, this study utilized categories derived from the work of Bell and Zemke (1987). These authors previously examined service recovery techniques and grouped them into five broad classes: apology, urgent reinstatement, empathy, symbolic atonement, and follow-up. During the course of sorting through the data, it was discovered that the category scheme needed to be revised in order to more accurately reflect the information contained in the participants' responses. In order to add more categories, the responses were read and put into categories. When several responses seemed to be similar, a new category was created to contain the responses. The final category taxonomy contained 13 categories (see Appendix D for complete descriptions and examples).

Second, once a final taxonomy of categories was established, two independent raters (unaware of the purpose of this study) were trained to code the open-ended question responses into the various categories. This training consisted of showing the raters the categories along with the description and examples for each category, which were summarized in a rater training package (see Appendix E). Once the raters understood the logistics and completed several trial sessions, they began to code the written comments. Inter-rater agreement was assessed twice during their rating sessions. Due to the large number of categories, it was assumed that chance played an insignificant role in agreement. Therefore, simple percent agreement was calculated. The percentage agreement ratios of .86 and .91, done on separate occasions and separate samples of coded units, indicate adequate inter-rater agreement.

Next, the data from the personality measure was entered into SPSS. The ratings for the negative items were reverse scored. Each of the items on the measure were then grouped under the corresponding personality factor (i.e., scale) in order to determine the five scale reliabilities and the means. One item (the factor "quiet") had to be dropped from the Agreeableness scale in

order to achieve adequate reliability. The alpha coefficients and means can be seen in Table 1.

Insert Table 1

For the fourth step, the age and gender for each participant was entered. A correlation was done between these two variables and the personality factors. The results demonstrated that personality was not related to age, and only two dimensions were slightly correlated with gender (women were more likely to have slightly lower scores on Conscientiousness and Agreeableness).

Finally, the category ratings were entered into the data set. Because there were very few cases in which the raters disagreed, the two raters were asked to come to a consensus concerning these cases. These codes were then used instead of the former codes for the units that were initially disagreed upon. Category ratings made by the coders were kept separate for “will” expectations and “should” expectations. This was done for every scenario (both “will” and “should” responses) for each participant. The frequencies for each category that was used in every scenario for every participant were calculated. At this point, it was apparent that there were very low endorsement rates of certain categories within each scenario (this is demonstrated in Table 2). I interpreted this widespread lack of category endorsement as an indicator that there

Insert Table 2

were simply too many too many categories. For this reason, the 13 categories were collapsed into two broad categories; termed “beneficial” and “detrimental”. The beneficial categories from Appendix D include: apology (#2), tangible compensation (#3), promise of quality (#4), intangible compensation (#7), fixing (#9), and follow-up (#12). The detrimental categories from Appendix D include: nothing (#1),excuses (#5), something worse than the service failure (#6),

customer initiated recovery (#8), explanations (#10), recovery on the customer (#11), and other (#13). The “other” category was placed in the detrimental category due to the fact that most of the responses coded under this category dealt with the idea that the service organization needed to change their service practices.

The frequency of endorsement rates for both the beneficial and detrimental categories were then calculated for each question (e.g., “will” and “should”) within each scenario (e.g., restaurant, hair salon, etc.).

Results

First, the intercorrelations were calculated for the Big Five scales. These intercorrelations are presented in Table 3. It is important to note that these intercorrelations are

Insert Table 3

similar to those found by Saucier (1994). Next, scores on the personality scales were related to category ratings for the open-ended questions (e.g., “what do you think the restaurant will do...?”). Because this relationship involves categorical data, it was determined to employ the use of the chi square statistic which determines whether two variables are independent of each other. In this case, the chi square test determines whether scores on the Big Five personality dimensions are independent of what people expect in terms of service recovery (e.g., category endorsed).

A series of chi square analyses were run examining the relationships between each Big Five personality dimension and (a) responses to the “will” expectation questions for each scenario (e.g., restaurant, hair salon, etc.), and (b) responses to the “should” expectation questions for each scenario. If a chi square test was significant, that would indicate that people who endorsed a certain category (i.e., expected something specific in terms of service recovery) differed along the

certain category (i.e., expected something specific in terms of service recovery) differed along the particular Big Five personality dimension from those people who did not endorse that certain category.

Of all the chi square analyses, only a single test was significant. Specifically, those people who scored high on Openness to Experience were significantly more likely to endorse a “detrimental” category for the restaurant “will” question than those who scored low on Openness to Experience. However, due to the lack of other findings, it can be assumed that this significance could have occurred by chance. Therefore, because there were no significant findings, the hypothesis that personality factors will be related to expectations and that they will be more closely related to “should” expectations rather than “will” expectations, must be rejected in the present study.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore whether or not personality factors were related to consumer expectations of recovery. It was hypothesized that personality factors, if found to be related to expectations, would be more related to the “should” expectations rather than “will” expectations.

In order to test these hypotheses, participants rated themselves on a personality scale and answered open-ended questions about four service failure scenarios. After placing the responses into categories, these scores were compared with the results of the personality scale scores in a series of chi square test. The results of this analysis indicated that expectations about service recovery and personality were unrelated. For this reason, both hypotheses (personality is related to expectations, and “should” expectations will be more significantly related to personality) had to be rejected.

There were several possible limitations found in the present study which could have directly or indirectly affected the outcome. It was theorized that personality would be directly related to expectations, especially “should” expectations. As discussed previously, “should” expectations were assumed to be cognitions. Prior research has shown personality to be a predictor of job satisfaction, and general beliefs--all cognitions (Costa, 1996; Langston & Sykes, 1997). However, it is possible that expectations are not directly influenced by personality. As seen in the Barrett and Pietromonaco (1997) study, personality factors were related to people’s perceptions of social interactions; that is, how people feel (i.e., emotions) when placed in socially interactive situations. With this information in mind, it is possible that emotions driven by personality traits may interfere with expectations; therefore, personality traits effect emotion which in turn effect expectations.

Second, there are several possible limitations concerning the method used in this study. One such possible limitation involves the participants used in the study. All of the participants were current students at Louisiana State University. It is possible that there was a restriction of range (i.e., not a large enough variety of people). Also, the mean age of the participants was 19.65 years. Students clustered around this age may not have had enough experience in dealing with the service organizations used in the scenarios. For example, students 19 years old have had the privilege of driving for only a few years and may not have had sufficient encounters with automobile mechanics that are necessary in order to formulate expectations. A sample with a higher mean age would probably have more experience with the service scenarios included in the study, thus allowing them to conceive more educated expectations.

In the course of the data analyzation, it became apparent that the sample used in the study was not sizable enough. When utilizing a chi square test, the ultimate goal is an even (i.e., fifty-

fifty) between groups of participants. The more the group numbers stray from this desired split, the more difficult it is to obtain results. In this study, there were only 85 participants and the groups did not produce an even split. This occurrence left a small number of participants in one group and a large number of participants in the other group. With a much larger sample, the groups would be large enough to significant differences even if the split was a little less than perfectly even.

A potentially limiting variable in the study was the level of severity of the service failures. As previously mentioned, Bell and Zemke (1987) noted that less severe failures leave the customer feeling annoyed whereas more severe failures leave the customer feeling victimized. Victimized customers, therefore, need a greater recovery effort on the part of the service organization. In this study, moderately severe service failures were included. It stands to reason that because the failures were moderate, they might not have evoked as much emotion as would very severe service failures. If emotions are involved in the link between personality and expectations, as the data from Barrett and Pietromonaco's (1997) study suggests, these very severe failures would perhaps demonstrate emotional responses that are more closely related to personality characteristics.

Another possible limitation could have been the use of written service failure scenarios. It is very possible that what people write down is not indicative of their actions in the actual situation; that is, what is written could be very different from what they would actually do and vice versa. This problem severely limits the external validity of the study.

The personality scale used in this study could have possibly contributed to the lack of results. Perhaps a longer, more specific scale could more accurately measure personality for its use in this study considering that more items would result in a more stable and reliable indication

of personality. In addition, an examination of the standard deviations in Table 1 indicates that a shorter scale may have not produced enough variability in personality when it was to be compared with categorical data. This made it less likely to yield significant chi square statistics in subsequent analyses.

Finally, there could have been a problem with the way the data from the open-ended questions was coded. It is possible that the categories derived from the study did not adequately capture the nature of the participants' expressed expectations. Perhaps the use of a more quantitative technique to assess customers' expectations would have yielded stronger results.

Although the results of this study did not support the predicted hypotheses, several implications may be useful in practice.

Different people do expect different things in terms of recovery efforts following service failure; in essence, no single recovery effort will fully satisfy every type of customer. This is clear due to the fact that although personality characteristics did not effect expectations, there were significant differences in the specific expectations different people had for service recovery efforts. For this reason, service organizations must become flexible enough to provide a range of recovery efforts to be initiated together for each type of potential service failure. Perhaps organizations should proactively gather information from customers about what efforts need to be incorporated into the organization's recovery plan. Outstanding recovery efforts that are derived from such research may facilitate an organization's competitive advantage.

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Appendix A

Service Failure Pilot Survey

Read the following scenario. After the scenario, you will find a list of different service failures (that is, things that could possibly go wrong). Below each failure, circle the number that corresponds to the severity of the service failure.

RESTAURANT:

You decide to treat your significant other (e.g., boyfriend/girlfriend) to a good meal at a nice restaurant. You ask some friends for advice on where to go. Almost all suggest Romaloe's because of the nice atmosphere, good service, excellent food, and reasonable prices. You decide to take their advice and make reservations for eight o'clock on Friday night in the non-smoking section. Now the time has come and you and your date are entering into the restaurant . . .

1. Even though you have a reservation, you end up having to wait for thirty minutes in order to be seated.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

2. You made reservations but there is no record of your name on the list and there are no tables currently available.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

3. Once you are seated and have been given the menus, the server does not return for an extremely long to take your order.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

4. After you have placed your order, you notice that the customers who were seated after you have already received their food.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

5. When the server brings you your food, you notice that it is not the food you ordered.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

6. Your server is not exactly friendly, in fact, you find him/her rather rude. You notice this when your server makes a sarcastic remark as you try to decide on an appetizer.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

7. When your food is delivered, you discover a strand of hair in the middle of your entrée (and its not yours!).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

8. When the server attempts to refill your water, he/she loses their balance and ends up spilling water all over your date.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

9. When you have both finished your food and drinks, it takes the server at least twenty minutes to discover this and bring you your check.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

10. When the server brings your bill, you notice that it is incorrect and you have been grossly overcharged.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

Read the following scenario. After the scenario, you will find a list of different service failures (that is, things that could possibly go wrong). Below each failure, circle the number that corresponds to the severity of the service failure.

AUTOMOBILE REPAIR SHOP

Your car/truck has begun to make a strange clanking sound. You figure that it is probably the carburetor and will have to be fixed. You bring it to your usual repair shop and discover that there is a new head mechanic. You proceed to tell him what the problem is . . .

1. When you go to pick up your car at the time it is scheduled to be ready, it is not.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

2. The price of the repairs is a lot more than the new mechanic quoted you when you first brought the car in.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

3. The new mechanic is rude: he laughs at your suggestion of what the problem is and talks down to you concerning your knowledge of automobile parts.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

4. When you are driving the car home, you notice that it is still making the clanking sound.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

5. Not only is your car making the same clanking sound as when you brought it in, there is also a new grinding sound. In essence, something else has broken and neither problem has been fixed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

6. While repairing your car, the mechanic finds something else wrong, fixes it without your consent, and charges you for it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

7. When the mechanic is repairing your car, he accidentally drops a bolt in the dashboard. He must then remove the dash board, keeping your car in the shop for an extra day.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

8. When you pick the car up, you notice that it is absolutely filthy on the outside and there is a greasy pair of footprints on the floor mat.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

Read the following scenario. After the scenario, you will find a list of different service failures (that is, things that could possibly go wrong). Below each failure, circle the number that corresponds to the severity of the service failure.

HAIR SALON / BARBERSHOP

You decide it is time for a new look, so you schedule a hair appointment at your favorite salon/barbershop.

1. You struggle to make it to the appointment on time but are not called to get your hair cut until 45 minutes after you arrive.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

2. When the stylist/barber cuts your hair, she/he cuts it way too short.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

3. When you get ready to leave, you notice that you look exactly the same as when you went in.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

4. You ask to get your hair dyed blonde and it actually comes out dark brown.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

5. The hair stylist/barber neglects to dust the cut hair off of your face and neck, making you itch like you had poison ivy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

6. Color, shampoo, or water is spilled on your nice clothes.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

7. The stylist/barber misunderstands your request and gives you the haircut that is the complete opposite of what you wanted.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

Read the following scenario. After the scenario, you will find a list of different service failures (that is, things that could possibly go wrong). Below each failure, circle the number that corresponds to the severity of the service failure.

AIRLINE FLIGHT

You have just have just arrived at the airport because you are about to depart on your dream vacation -- a two-week long stay in Hawaii.

1. Your flight leaves 30 minutes late.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

2. Once you get to Hawaii, you find out that your baggage is lost.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

3. The agent assured you that you have an aisle seat, but once you get on the plane, you discover that you are in the middle seat.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

4. Your reservation is for first class, but it accidentally got overbooked. You now have to sit in coach.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

5. There are not enough blankets and it is very cold on the plane.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

6. The toilet in the bathroom overflowed on you.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

7. The attendant takes ten minutes to respond to your call for service even when no one else is calling him/her.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

8. All of the overhead compartments are full by the time you board the plane so you are forced to put your carry-on luggage under your seat, cramping your foot space.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Least			Moderately			Most
severe			severe			severe

Appendix B

HOW ACCURATELY CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

Please use this list of common human traits to describe yourself as accurately as possible. Describe yourself as you see yourself at the present time, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you are generally or typically, as compared with other persons you know of the same sex and of roughly your same age.

Before each trait, please write a number indicating how accurately that trait describes you, using the following rating scale:

<u>Extremely</u> <u>Inaccurate</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>Inaccurate</u>	<u>Moderately</u> <u>Inaccurate</u>	<u>Slightly</u> <u>Inaccurate</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>Slightly</u> <u>Accurate</u>	<u>Moderately</u> <u>Accurate</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>Accurate</u>	<u>Extremely</u> <u>Accurate</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

____ Bashful	____ Energetic	____ Moody	____ Systematic
____ Bold	____ Envious	____ Organized	____ Talkative
____ Careless	____ Extraverted	____ Philosophical	____ Tempermental
____ Cold	____ Fretful	____ Practical	____ Touchy
____ Complex	____ Harsh	____ Quiet	____ Uncreative
____ Cooperative	____ Imaginative	____ Relaxed	____ Unenvious
____ Creative	____ Inefficient	____ Rude	____ Unintellectual
____ Deep	____ Intellectual	____ Shy	____ Unsympathetic
____ Disorganized	____ Jealous	____ Sloppy	____ Warm
____ Efficient	____ Kind	____ Sympathetic	____ Withdrawn

Check one: _____ Male _____ Female

Age: _____

Appendix C

Main Study

Please read the following service encounter scenarios carefully, then **print** your responses to the two questions following the passage.

You decide to treat your significant other (e.g., boyfriend/girlfriend) to a good meal at a nice restaurant. You ask some friends for advice on where to go. Almost all suggest “Romaloe's Place” because of the nice atmosphere, excellent food, and reasonable prices. You decide to take their advice and make reservations for eight o'clock on Friday night in the non-smoking section. Now the time has come and you and your date are entering into the restaurant and even though you made the reservation, you end up having to wait for thirty minutes to be seated.

1. Based on prior experience you have had with restaurants such as the one discussed, what do you think the restaurant **will** do in response to the failure (i.e., thing that went wrong)?
2. Regardless of what you think this restaurant **will** do, what do you think this restaurant **should** do in response to this service failure?

Please read the following service encounter scenarios carefully, then **print** your responses to the two questions following the passage.

Your car/truck has begun to make a strange clanking sound. You figure that it is probably the carburetor and will have to be fixed. You bring it to your usual repair shop and discover that there is a new head mechanic. You proceed to tell him what the problem is and he promises that the car will be ready the following day. However, the mechanic calls and explains that when he was repairing your car, he accidentally dropped a bolt in the dash board. He must then remove the dash board, keeping your car in the shop for an extra day, although he doesn't charge you for it.

1. Based on prior experience you have had with mechanics such as the one discussed, what do you think the mechanic **will** do in response to the failure (i.e., thing that went wrong)?
2. Regardless of what you think this mechanic **will** do, what do you think this mechanic **should** do in response to the service failure?

Please read the following service encounter scenarios carefully, then **print** your responses to the two questions following the passage.

You decide it is time for a new look, so you schedule a hair appointment at your favorite salon/barbershop. After the stylist/barber cuts your hair, she/he neglects to brush the cut hair off of your face and neck, making your skin feel itchy.

1. Based on prior experience you have had with hair salons/barbershops such as the one discussed, what do you think this hair salon/barbershop **will** do in response to the failure (i.e., the thing that went wrong)?
2. Regardless of what you think this hair salon/barbershop **will** do, what do you think this hair salon/barbershop **should** do in response to the service failure?

Please read the following service encounter scenarios carefully, then **print** your responses to the two questions following the passage.

You have just have just arrived at the airport because are about to depart on your dream vacation -- a two-week long stay in Hawaii. When you booked your reservation, the travel agent assured you that you would have an aisle seat, but once you board the plane, you discover that you are in the middle seat.

1. Based on prior experience you have had with airlines such as the one discussed, what do you think the airline **will** do in response to the failure (i.e., thing that went wrong)?
2. Regardless of what you think this airline **will** do, what do you think this airline **should** do in response to the service failure?

Appendix D

Content Analysis Categories

1. Nothing

- a. The service organization will do nothing to recover from the service failure.
- b. The service organization is unsympathetic.
 - the organization does not understand or try to make up for the inconvenience
- c. The customer's needs and concerns are ignored.
- d. The service organization does not offer any sort of compensation.
- e. The service organization pretends like the service failure did not happen.
 - the customer is ignored

2. Apology

- a. A verbal or written apology is offered by a representative of the service organization when a failure occurs.

3. Tangible Compensation

- a. The service organization provides a symbol of repentance for the occurrence of the service failure.
 - the customer gets a free drink while waiting for a table
 - a discount on a meal, haircut, flight, or car repair
 - the mechanic provides the customer with another form of transportation while his/her car is being repaired.
 - The airline offers free flier miles or a seat upgrade

4. Promise of Quality

- a. The service organization relays to the customer that the problem will never happen

again and the future visits will provide the customer with better service.

- b. The service organization relates to the customer letting them know that the organization understands and sympathizes with the customer.
 - the mechanic says that he will do everything he can to make up for the extra time that the car had to be kept in the shop because he knows what a hassle it is to be without a car
 - the host/hostess makes sure that the customer gets the best table in the house because he/she knows that it is the restaurant's fault and responsibility to respect and keep the customer.

5. Excuses

- a. The service organization offers excuses instead of recovering from the problem.
 - the flight attendant explains that seating arrangements are out of his/her control
- b. The service organization tries to blame a third party for the service failure instead of trying to recover.
 - the airline blames the travel agent by stating that they have nothing to do with the seating arrangement and should not make senseless promises
 - a new host/hostess is blamed for neglecting to write down your reservation

6. Something Worse than the Service Failure

- a. Instead of trying to recover from the initial problem, the service organization goes a step further and causes even greater problems.
 - the mechanic takes his time in getting the customer's car fixed even though it was his fault it was not ready on time in the first place
 - the customer has to wait as long as those patrons who did not have a reservation

(they are not given the next available table) even though it was the restaurant's fault that the reservation was not written down.

7. Intangible Compensation

- a. The service organization offers some type of compensation.
 - the restaurant makes accommodations for the customer such as finding the customer a place to sit while the table is being prepared
 - trying to get other aisle seat airline patrons to trade for a middle seat
- b. The service organization goes beyond simply rectifying the service failure
 - immediate service
 - attentive and pleasant service representatives
 - better accommodations than if the service had gone smoothly
 - working overtime to get the job done
 - a member of the management getting involved

8. Customer Initiated Recovery

- a. The customer feels that it is up to them to recover from the service organization's problem
 - the customer must ask other to trade seats with them

9. Fixing

- a. The service organization simply recovers from the service failure, nothing more, nothing less
 - the hair stylist/barber just brushes off the hair.

10. Explanations

- a. The service organization explains how/why the service failure happened and how it

- b. The service organization explains how/why the service failure happened and how it can be corrected.

11. Recovery on Customer

- a. The service organization suggests that the customer is the one that needs to resolve the problem
 - the flight attendant tells the customer that the only way to get an aisle seat is to ask around and see if anyone wants to trade
 - the restaurant suggests that next time the customer should call and confirm the reservation before coming in

12. Follow Up

- a. A representative of the service organization will make certain that the customer is comfortable, happy, and satisfied.
 - a waiter/waitress will continuously check on the customer to insure that the rest of the meal is going smoothly

13. Other

- the service organization should change their practices that cause serious and/or frequent service failures

Appendix E

Rater Instructions

This purpose of this project is to place each of the participants responses into a category. This process is called Content Analysis. Each response is broken down into units of action which are separated by slashes. Because some parts of the responses are uncodable, they are not separated and will not be included in the categorization. All of the units of the responses that are codable are indicated by enclosure in two slash marks and were given a circled number. The number indicates how many units are in each response. For example, if there is only one unit in a response, the number 01 will be circled by the unit. If there are two units in a response, the first unit will be 01 and the second unit will be 02.

In order to rate these surveys, you will be given, a copy of the response sheets for each participant, a score sheet, and a list of Content Analysis categories.

1. Response sheets: There will be four response sheets per participant. Each response sheet will deal with one out of four service organizations: a restaurant, a mechanic, a hairstylist/barber, and an airline.
2. Score sheet: You will be given one set of score sheets. The columns are explained below:
 - a. Subject = the participant's number. This is indicated on the top right hand corner of every response sheet. It is important to keep these sheets together and in order.
 - b. Service = the number assigned to each service organization represented by each of the four response sheets: 01=restaurant, 02=mechanic, 03=hairstylist/barber, 04=airline. All of the service response sheets for each participant are in numerical

order. For example, for subject 001, the response sheets will be presented as 01, 02, 03, and 04. Try not to let these get out of order to avoid any confusion.

- c. Will/Should = There are two questions on each of the response sheets. One concerns what the customer believes will be done and the other concerns what the customer believes should be done. The will questions are given the number 01 and the should questions are given the number 02. It is important to note that one half of the participants were given the will (01) questions first and the should (02) second, whereas the other half of the participants were given the should (02) questions first and the will (01) questions second. Follow these in order. After every two participants, the order of the questions will be reversed. For example, for participants 001 and 002, the will questions are asked first. The number 01 has already been placed in the will/should column for each service organization (response sheet). Therefore, the will response units will be coded first. For participants 003 and 004, the should questions are asked first. The number 02 has already been placed in the will/should column for each service organization (response sheet). Therefore, the should response units will be coded first. Pay very careful attention to this as you code the units.

3. Unit = as mentioned in the introductory paragraph, the unit numbers are the units of action in each response that have been marked off by slashes and given a number.

These unit numbers have already been placed on the score sheet.

To begin coding:

1. Read over the Content Analysis categories carefully and try to familiarize yourself with them.

2. Pick up the first participant's response sheets.

- the first response sheet is the restaurant (01)
- the first question is a will question (01)
- there is only one unit of action in the response (01)
- read the action, decide what category it needs to be placed in, write the category number (the three digit number to the left of each category on the Content Analysis Category Sheet)

After this you can move on to the next response:

- the first service sheet is the restaurant again (01)
- the second question is the a should question (02)
- there is only one unit of action in the response (01)
- place the category number in the appropriate column

If you have any questions about this procedure, please address them to the experimenter.

Follow these steps for all of the participants' responses making sure that you are on the right subject number, response sheet, and will/should number. Make sure that you do not skip any units of action. Not all of the units will fit neatly into each category. However, all of the categories included are pretty specific and have various examples to help you to understand what is meant. The purpose is to place the units into a category as best you can. Be wary of overusing the "Other" category. This is meant as a last resort and should only be used if there is absolutely no other place the unit can fit. One example of such a unit is given under the category.

Remember—there can only be one category for each unit. If it appears that a particular unit could fit into more than one category, use your best judgment and pick one.

Do not discuss unit-category placement with the other rater as it can bias the results of this study.

Interrater agreement will be calculated at intervals determined at a later date by the experimenter.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities for the Big Five Personality Scale Scores

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha Coefficient
Extraversion	6.29	1.16	0.77
Agreeableness	7.55	0.92	0.77
Conscientiousness	6.59	1.35	0.83
Neuroticism	5.37	1.40	0.82
Openness	6.34	1.20	0.8

Table 2

Percentage of Endorsements for Each Category under Scenario Responses

Categories	Restaurant		Automobile		Hair Salon		Airline	
	Will	Should	Will	Should	Will	Should	Will	Should
1	38.8*	3.5	48.2*	7.1	18.8	7.1	35.3*	16.5
2	55.3*	35.3*	36.5*	16.5	30.6*	28.2*	23.5*	8.2
3	31.8*	76.5*	10.6	78.8*	7.1	16.5	8.2	31.8*
4	2.4	5.9	7.1	10.6	7.1	3.5	2.4	2.4
5	4.7	0.0	4.7	1.2	0.0	0.0	12.9	3.5
6	2.4	0.0	15.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.0
7	15.3	16.5	0.0	8.2	1.2	4.7	31.8*	37.6*
8	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.2	28.2*	29.4*	9.4	5.9
9	3.5	5.9	14.1	4.7	54.1*	54.1*	17.6	34.1*
10	1.2	1.2	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	2.4
11	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.2	2.4	1.2
12	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4
13	1.2	11.8	1.2	3.5	5.9	14.1	0.0	5.9

Note: * represents over 20% of people endorsed

Table 3

Intercorrelations among Big Five Personality Scales

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Extraversion					
Agreeableness	0.17				
Conscientiousness	0.14	0.37**			
Neuroticism	0.22**	0.08	0.00		
Openness	0.1	0.24	0.02	0.11	

Note: * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

n's range from 83 to 85