

**Consumer Revenge Using Online and Social Media:
An Examination of the Role of Service Failure Types and Cognitive Appraisal Processes**

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Abstract

Given the pervasive spread and use of the Internet and social media, consumer use of these new forums for expressing their revenge intentions has also increased. This research examines the impacts of service outcome and service process failures on consumer online revenge intentions. Using insights from cognitive appraisal theory, a comprehensive model is developed and tested to examine the impacts of service failure types on consumers' primary and secondary appraisal processes that lead to online revenge intentions. The model was tested in the UK and in Jordan. Results show that for the two countries, different service failure types lead to different cognitive appraisal processes, and to intentions to use different online revenge platforms.

Keywords: Customer Online Revenge, Cognitive Appraisal Process, Expectancy of Reach, Cross Cultural Comparison, Service Failure and Recovery

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With the prevalence of the Internet and social media, consumers have many more opportunities to offer their opinions to firms, to other consumers with similar interests, and to the general public. Typically, such opinions are reviews of products, services, and firms, and could be positive or negative. While most negative reviews are posted in good faith and with the intentions of aiding users and consumers, or of offering feedback to the firm, some consumers publicly post their negative reviews with the intention to harm a firm that they perceive has treated them badly (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003; Kähr, Nyffenegger, Krohmer, & Hoyer, 2016; Tripp & Grégoire, 2011). In the case of service failures, consumers may seek revenge, especially when they feel betrayed by the firm and/or feel helpless to change the situation in which they find themselves (Gelbrich, 2010; Tripp & Grégoire, 2011). Such revenge behaviors are spurred by different consumer perceptions, intentions, and attributions of blame, as well as by the type of publicity sought as compared to more general reviews, comments and opinions related to products, services, and/or firms (Grégoire, Tripp, & Legoux, 2009; Grégoire, Laufer, & Tripp, 2010; Haj-Salem & Chebat, 2014; Joireman, Grégoire, Devezer, & Tripp, 2013; Zourrig, Chebat, & Toffoli, 2009).

Revenge behaviors are often evident in public postings on various social media sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube), third-party complaint sites (e.g., consumeraffairs.org), or specific anti-corporation websites. The potential damage to firms from negative reviews, including revenge, is much greater in online environments, not only due to the ready availability of technologies and their pervasive use, but also because of their potential to “go viral” and to reach a vast audience in a very short time (Tripp & Grégoire, 2011). Moreover, customers

perceive online reviews to be more credible, as compared to corporate communications, and therefore, online reviews are particularly detrimental to weak brands (Ho-Dac, Carson & Moore, 2013). Revenge behaviors online are also motivated by public perceptions that the prevalence and reach of new media and new technologies would cause greater damage to the “offending” firm (Tripp & Grégoire, 2011).

Revenge behaviors may have modest origins, such as dissatisfaction with products (Folkes, Koletsky & Graham, 1987), disappointment over failed delivery of service (Tripp & Grégoire, 2011), perceptions of betrayal of loyalty and/or relationship norms (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008), perceptions of price unfairness (Xia, Monroe & Cox, 2004), or dissatisfaction with the firm’s complaint management processes and outcomes (Joireman et al., 2013). In some contexts, the initial sources of disappointment and frustration may become more aggravated, causing the consumer to conclude that “getting even” with the firm may be only recourse available (Bougie et al., 2003). Accordingly, a more detailed examination is warranted for the contexts in which consumers seek revenge, and for the emotional appraisal processes that lead to online revenge behaviors, especially in the event of service failures. This research, therefore, seeks to explore the issues related to emotional appraisal and to the forms of online revenge after service failure. The paper addresses the impact of severity of service failure and of consumer cognitive appraisals on the desire for revenge. Second, the research investigates how cognitive evaluations mediate relationships between the desire for revenge and the intention to engage in online revenge. The third area of focus is the significant differences in cognition and emotion that lead to a desire for revenge, including analysis of revenge intentions across cultural/national contexts. A framework so developed is tested using samples from two countries—the United Kingdom and Jordan.

This research aims to make three key contributions to the extant understanding of consumer revenge behaviors. First, this research shows that both desire for revenge and revenge behaviors arise from consumer engagement in cognitive appraisals of their situation and evaluation of intentions prior to engaging in revenge. Initial research on consumer dissatisfaction and anger in response to service failures has explored revenge behaviors as arising from episodes of rage or temporary lapses of reason (Bougie et al., 2003). Thus, prior research has emphasized anger as the mediator between the attributions made in the context of product or service failure and the desire to complain (e.g., Folkes, et al., 1987). Recent approaches to the study of customer rage and revenge behaviors consider cognitive appraisals by consumers, rather than their spontaneous actions, as a primary trigger for revenge or coping intentions and for actions in response to service failures (Grégoire et al., 2009; Haj-Salem & Chebat, 2014; Surachartkumtonkun, Patterson & McColl-Kennedy, 2013). This study extends the cognitive appraisal model of coping strategies (Stephens & Gwinner 1998) and empirically tests a comprehensive model that links cognitive appraisals, emotions, and evaluation of actions that lead to the intention to seek revenge online.

This research introduces and tests cognitive evaluation of intended actions as mediators of the desire for revenge and its translation into more active forms (in this case, the intention to seek revenge online). While the distinction between a desire for revenge and revenge behavior has been made in past research (e.g., Grégoire et al., 2010), this research explores whether the desire for revenge is more strongly associated with intention to engage in online revenge when consumers evaluate their actions to have the maximal impact with minimal downside. Attention to such secondary appraisal processes is particularly useful when evaluating the likely impact of consumer revenge through various modes and media. For example, revenge through online platforms is often evaluated as having a low downside and great reach, and therefore, is

considered a very viable option by aggrieved consumers. That online revenge responses can take different forms is given due consideration, including forms that involve venting online by taking extra effort (such as posting self-made videos on social media), involving external others (such as posting on third-party sites), and engaging in immediate revenge behaviors (such as using mobile and social media soon after the service failure incident). This fine-grained examination of consumer revenge brings into sharp focus the impact of modern technologies in shaping consumer behavioral responses to service failures. New technologies not only empower consumers (Labrecque, von dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak & Hofacker, 2013), but are also more congenial to the types of social activism worldwide that allow intentional damage to a firm and its brand (Kähr et al., 2016).

Finally, studies confirm that consumer rage episodes are on the rise in various countries, despite earlier assumptions that such behaviors are prevalent primarily in Western, individualistic societies (Patterson, Brady, & McColl-Kennedy, 2016). Moreover, the global expansion and increased prevalence of consumer communications technologies provide consumers with ready means for online revenge. While cross-cultural generalizations may have to await extensive empirical research across broad sets of countries, the model developed in this research is tested in at least two contrasting cultures (the UK and Jordan), wherein the means and opportunities for online revenge are widely available. Broad conceptualization of appraisals and emotions leading to the desire for revenge, and its impact on online revenge intentions are equally applicable in both cultural contexts. At the same time, subtle differences in both the triggers and the cognitive evaluations may point to the fact that cultural factors influence the translation of desire for revenge into more cogent intentions.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The first section presents a discussion of relevant literature and develops a conceptual model linking cognitive appraisal and emotional

elicitation processes to online revenge intentions. This is followed by a description of the empirical methodology and results from two countries. The paper concludes with several implications for theory and practice as well as suggestions for future research.

CONSUMER ONLINE REVENGE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In voluntary exchange relationships, a vast majority of consumers may choose not to follow up on their initial disappointment and instead, simply exit the relationship and switch providers, or become wary of future interactions (Day & Bodur, 1978). However, customers whose emotional reaction to a service or consumption experience is strongly negative may choose to complain to the firm. Prior research has shown that perceptions of inadequate complaint resolution, or feelings of helplessness or anger, trigger results that range from exiting the relationship to various coping responses that include vindictive WOM (Gelbrich, 2010), retaliatory behaviors (Joireman et al., 2013), and acts of revenge (Zourrig et al., 2009).

Consistent with prior literature, customer revenge is defined as customer actions that are intended to punish or cause harm to a firm in response to perceived damages imposed by the firm (Grégoire et al., 2010; Zourrig et al., 2009).² Prior literature has specified that customer revenge can take the form of both physical aggression toward property and aggressive behavior toward a firm's employees (e.g., Grégoire et al., 2010); however, the present research considers only intention to engage in revenge through online sites, which includes intentions to post reviews and videos through the Internet and social media.

The focus on online revenge intentions is particularly noteworthy both because there has been a substantial increase in negative online word-of-mouth (eWOM), as made evident by

² The literature also uses terms such as "retaliation" and "vengeance" to describe consumer actions intended to harm a firm; however, a review by Grégoire et al. (2010) reveals that these terms are consistent with the definition of revenge used here.

surveys such as the independent *Customer Rage Surveys*, and because such reviews can now be posted on sites such as *Yelp* where they cannot be changed or deleted by the reviewed firm (Gustke, 2015). This research extends the sparse current literature on customer revenge intentions, showing how consumers' evaluations of their own actions determine the online platform they select for expressing outrage. Specifically, the model proposed in this study extends insights from cognitive appraisal theories and empirical research on negative WOM and revenge to demonstrate that when consumers blame firms for serious service failures, they would evaluate both their own situations as well as the consequences of their actions before engaging in online revenge through different platforms. Thus, the model first considers how appraisal of service failure instances leads to a desire for revenge, and then demonstrates that consumers' evaluation of the impact of their actions when desiring revenge will lead to different online revenge intentions.

Two specific types of service failures are noted in the literature - outcome failure and process failure (Bitner, Booms & Tetreault, 1990; Smith, Bolton & Wagner, 1999). In outcome failure, the firm fails to fulfill the basic service promise or, from another perspective, the consumer does not receive the outcome expected from the firm's promise (Smith et al., 1999). In process failure, the delivery of the service itself is perceived to be flawed or lacking in some way (Smith et al., 1999). The model, depicted in Figure 1 and elaborated below, is an important departure in that it considers these two different forms of service failures as having different impacts on consumers' desire for revenge. Moreover, the empirical test of the model in two different country contexts seeks to identify whether customers view any one specific type of service failure as more egregious.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Severity of the service failure and primary appraisal

Services marketing literature suggests that the customer's satisfaction judgment and negative responses are affected by the magnitude of the service failure (Smith et al, 1999; Hess, Ganesan, & Klein, 2003). Some research has found that the higher the magnitude or severity of service failure, the lower the level of consumer satisfaction (e.g., Gilly & Gelb, 1982; Hoffman, Kelly, & Rotalsky, 1995). Because consumers may invoke normative standards for service performance (for both outcome and process), severe service failures represent extreme deviations from this standard. Given that consumer evaluations of satisfaction/dissatisfaction involve comparing the quality and/or standards of service delivery with the expectations of such delivery, a larger gap between expected and actual delivery portends a greater level of dissatisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

In the more extreme cases of dissatisfaction, disappointments and breakdowns in relationships will trigger cognitive appraisals of the situation and, likely, negative emotions (Grégoire et al., 2010; Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013; Zourrig et al., 2009). Consumers may perceive their reactions to be justified based on their attribution of failure and the assignment of blame and betrayal on the provider (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Moreover, because greater perceived severity of the service failure is associated with greater economic or social losses, the more extreme cases of failure could be the initial impetus for a resulting desire for, or intention or exhibition of, customer rage and revenge (Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013). Severity of the service failure is thus the starting point in this study's model of appraisals and emotions that lead to revenge intentions.

In a typical voluntary exchange situation, prior to the service failure, consumers may perceive an ability to influence the situation and turn it to their advantage (Menon & Bansal, 2006; Grégoire et al., 2010). In a recovery situation, specifically, customers with higher levels of

perceived power may feel that they can influence the outcome to their advantage (Grégoire et al., 2010). However, severe cases of service failure test these customer assumptions, due to the greater gap between the actual situation and consumer perceptions of ability to influence the situation. This may be a result of complex factors underlying the service failure that consumers are not able to identify and expose in order to place blame on the provider. Therefore, perceptions of the severity of service failure would be negatively associated with consumer perceived power.

Similarly, cognitive emotions theory (Bagozzi et al., 1999) suggests that the greater the severity of the service failure, the greater the gap between the actual situation and the consumer's mental representation of the desired state (or goal). Because consumers evaluate services with respect to initial expectations, the appraisals that are judged to be inconsistent with expectations or desired outcomes could be considered goal incongruent (Soscia, 2007). Goal incongruence could also stem from an evaluation of the environment—in this context, the post-transaction environment—as “not conducive to goal fulfilment” (MacInnis & de Mello, 2005; p. 2). Thus, service severity leads to categorization of the service failure event, whether outcome or process, as goal incongruent.

Since both primary appraisals—evaluation of perceived power and goal incongruence—are affected by the magnitude of service failure, this study proposes that:

H₁: For both service outcome and service process failures, the severity of service failure is negatively associated with (a) perceived power, but will positively influence (b) perceptions of goal incongruence.

Effect of primary appraisal on negative emotions

From the perspective of appraisal theory, emotions are based on appraisals of situations and events. Bagozzi et al. (1999) define emotion in appraisal as a “mental state of readiness that

arises from cognitive appraisal of events or thoughts ... and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it” (p. 184). Instead of a direct impact of specific events or physical circumstances, appraisal theorists maintain that the psychological appraisal made by the individual who experiences and interprets the events and circumstances is a primary influence on positive and negative emotions (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Positive emotions arise from motive-consistent or goal-congruent situations, while negative emotions stem from goal-incongruent situations (Soscia, 2007). Attributions made when appraising the situation do matter. In the case of a service failure or recovery failure, when a consumer makes a blame attribution, the primary negative emotion is other directed (Gelbrich, 2010; Rosenman, 1991). Such negative emotions may include dislike, anger, frustration, and revenge (Gelbrich 2010).

Both service outcome failures and service process failures can be expected to elicit negative emotions. However, in the case of service outcome failures, negative emotions are likely to be stronger and emanate from blame attributions, given that the promised service was not delivered. Appraisal theorists also argue that blame attributions are retrospective emotions that are often invoked in hindsight (Gelbrich, 2010; Rosenman, 1991). In the case of service process failures, the service may have been delivered, but with less than the desired quality or level of service. While both situations involve goal incongruence, the difference is centered in the perceived potential of the consumer to deal with the situation (Lazarus, 1991). Service outcome failures are clearly observable and measurable and in such instances, the consumer often feels that compensation is a just recovery (Smith et al., 1999). However, in a service process failure (e.g., when the employee delivering the service is rude), the consumer can do little to alter the situation or obtain justice. They only obtain a social or symbolic gesture such as an apology. Consumers may feel helpless because they perceive the situation to be irreversible,

and they may even be certain that the situation is unlikely to change in the future (Gelbrich, 2010).

In service outcome failures is that the loss may be primarily utilitarian, so that the consumer desires immediate action (such as speedy and just service recovery). On the other hand, a service process failure may lead to the proverbial “bad taste in the mouth,” when consumers experience disappointment for having chosen that provider and may feel regret for the alternatives not selected (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). In such goal-incongruent situations, the customer is likely to feel betrayed, especially because s/he may believe that normative standards (such as those of professional service delivery) have been violated (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). This is especially true when there is a clear attribution of agency after evaluating the circumstances (Soscia, 2007). Attributions to the other (in this case, the service provider) are easier for service failures (where the provider’s attention to processes could have mitigated the damage), as compared to service outcome failures (where any number of factors apart from agency also could have contributed). Attributions of blame may directly contribute to anger (Bougie et al., 2003; Soscia, 2007); however, when consumers perceive violations in service process failures to be intentional, the result may be perceptions of betrayal (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Thus, goal incongruence is likely to have a greater impact in process failure situations, prompting the hypothesis that:

H₂: In service process failure situations, as compared to service outcome failure situations, goal incongruence will increase consumer (a) feelings of helplessness, and (b) perceptions of betrayal.

Yet another appraisal process stems from the consumer’s ego involvement in the service exchange (Lazarus, 1991). Ego involvement is self-oriented and consists of self-esteem, self-identity, and moral values (Zourrig et al., 2009). In service situations, ego involvement is

manifested as customers' perceptions of their social power (Menon & Bansal, 2006). Grégoire et al. (2010) conceptualized that such perceived power refers to the consumer's perceived ability to control or change the situation to his/her advantage after a service failure.

While such perceptions of power may have varied sources (Menon & Bansal, 2006), customers with a higher sense of their own power can be expected to react differently in the context of service failure as compared to those who may feel powerless. This is because powerless individuals may feel dependent or controlled by others (Gelbrich, 2010), while customers with high levels of perceived power may engage in proactive and aggressive service recovery claims. Particularly in situations of service failure when the external others are blamed, customers who perceive themselves to have high levels of social power would be more likely to engage in confrontation. The anger that results from the assignment of responsibility to specific other parties may also be a result of goal incongruence (Soscia, 2007), but a deeper examination of rage has shown that aggressive behaviors are often associated with higher perceived consumer power, which may have strong individualistic origins (Grégoire et al, 2010; Patterson et al., 2016). Such confrontations are prompted by retrospective appraisal of the situation as one of betrayal that deserves appropriate response. Conversely, such powerful individuals are also less likely to succumb to feelings of helplessness. Both service failure contexts - outcome and process - support the proposal that:

H3: Perceived power will have (a) a positive effect on perceived betrayal, and (b) a negative effect on helplessness.

Effects of negative emotions on desire for revenge

Helplessness and perceived betrayal are prospective and retrospective emotions, respectively, that arise in a service failure context (Gelbrich, 2010; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). These two emotions are likely to lead to evaluation of coping potential prior to engaging in

confrontations and negative word-of-mouth (Berger, 2014). Helplessness occurs when people feel that they cannot cope with a goal-incongruent event (Gelbrich, 2010; Lazarus 1991).

Situations of service failure where the actual service is far short of the expected service could lead to perceptions of helplessness, i.e., a lack of control of the situation either now or in the future (Gelbrich, 2010). While individuals may perceive a lack of control in other contexts as well, such as when they feel powerless, the key distinction is that powerless individuals may attempt to alleviate this state while helpless individuals will conclude that the situation will not or cannot be changed in the future (Gelbrich, 2010; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008).

Perceived betrayal occurs when individuals feel that the norms of a social relationship are violated (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Compared to merely dissatisfied customers who may only seek redress, those who feel betrayed are more likely to seek both compensation and revenge (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). Betrayal involves more conscious effort and is a key cognitive evaluation in which some consumers may engage, especially in contexts where normative standards are violated (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Perceptions of betrayal are stronger when the violation is perceived as quite severe and the actions or inactions themselves are quite deviant from the norms of distributive and procedural justice (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Smith et al., 1999). Empirical analysis by Grégoire and Fisher (2008) found that perceived betrayal increased consumers' retaliatory behaviors. The focus of this work is on behavioral intentions, and the following hypothesis offered for both service outcome and process failure contexts:

H_{4a}: Perceived betrayal will significantly increase the desire for revenge.

Helplessness is a negative emotion elicited after a primary appraisal of a stressful service failure event. As noted, helplessness occurs when people feel that they cannot change goal-incongruent events and situations of ego involvement (Gelbrich, 2010). In a service failure

context, consumers could directly seek out redress, or they may feel that they cannot directly address the firm for reparation or and/or recovery. In the latter case, they are more likely to engage in confrontational coping (Fridja, 1987). Consumers who feel helpless to directly confront the service provider may engage in vindictive negative word-of-mouth (Gelbrich, 2010), or harbor a latent desire for revenge. This behavior results from the perception that they cannot change or remedy a situation, either through force or persuasion (Gelbrich, 2010).

Therefore, in both service process failure and outcome failure contexts, it is proposed that:

H_{4b}: Helplessness will significantly increase the desire for revenge.

Feelings of helplessness create discomfort for the customer and potentially threaten senses of competence, self-worth, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Bunker & Ball, 2009). The intensity of these feelings is more likely to lead to feelings of desperation when the situation is perceived to be unchangeable (Hirsch, 1999, Wiggin & Yalch, 2015). When firms violate relationship norms and norms of justice, the impact on consumers with high levels of helplessness is quite strong. Appraisal theory also suggests that negative emotions such as helplessness create a desire to deflect responsibility to the “wrong-doing” party and engage in retaliatory behaviors (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008, Ward & Ostrom, 2006; Wiggin & Yalch, 2015). Helplessness has been identified as one of the important factors influencing consumer online word-of-mouth complaints (Balaji, Jha, & Royne, 2015; Gelbrich, 2010, Singh & Pandya, 1991; Xu, Yap & Hyde, 2016). Because people who feel helpless also feel less empowered to deal directly with a firm to seek active recovery, reparation, and redress, they are also more likely to feel highly betrayed by the firm (Grégoire et al, 2010). Therefore, in both service process and outcome failure contexts, a hypothesis can be put forth that:

H_{4c}: Helplessness will significantly increase perceptions of betrayal.

Desire for revenge and online revenge intentions

Desire for revenge (DR) refers to customers' feelings of need to exert harm toward a company that treated them wrong in some way (Grégoire et al., 2010). As Grégoire et al. (2010) argue, the emphasis on DR is important because, depending on the context, customers are not always able to transform their desires into action. This raises the question of what context and what type of online revenge intentions will be driven by DR. The pervasive spread and availability of the Internet, social media, and mobile platforms have enabled a variety of forums for the revenge-seeking consumer (Grégoire et al., 2015; Berger, 2014). As previously noted, the model offered here makes a distinction between intentions of immediate-emotion focused revenge, venting-focused revenge, and third-party enabled online revenge. The fundamental difference among these three types of online revenge is the consumer expectation of desired outcome for action (e.g., immediate emotional release, need for support, and problem-focused revenge).

Immediate online revenge intentions are spurred directly by emotions and are aimed at quickly releasing negative emotions as a confrontational coping strategy. Such revenge intentions are formed shortly after the consumer experiences a service failure. The ubiquity of mobile devices enables any customer to access the Internet through his/her mobile phone. In this coping strategy, little customer effort is required and consumers could use social media platforms for vindictive posts about the company, use blogs, or post to various complaint sites.

The second type of online revenge intention centers on venting-focused behaviors that are more intense, and for which the consumer expends more time and effort, creating websites, Facebook pages, and videos that criticize companies or show them in a bad light, in the hope that these would go viral. Similar to proactive problem-focused coping strategies, the aim of revenge through venting online is to solve a problem by sharing a story with the public, warning other consumers not to deal with the misbehaving firm. A distinction between online complaining and

such venting is that while online complaining addresses the public in an attempt to warn them about negative service experiences and events, venting-focused revenge is primarily intended to harm the firm's or brand's reputation through direct confrontation.

Third-party focused online revenge intentions emerge when angry consumers aim to get revenge through posting vindictive reviews and complaints on consumer advocacy platforms such as *complaintsboard.com* and *consumeraffairs.com*. Similar to support-seeking coping strategies, consumers in this category would like to take direct action against the misbehaving firm through third parties (Stephens & Gwinner, 1998). The primary intention is that of involving a powerful third party to either redress the issue directly or to shame the firm publicly in order to coerce action.

Desire for revenge would more likely be translated into online revenge intentions in the case of service outcome failures, as compared to service process failures. One reason could be that in service outcome failures, consumers have suffered a utilitarian (economic) loss and perceive that the firm has taken advantage of them. Thus, it is possible that online revenge behaviors are consumer attempts to right a wrong such that firm's future revenues and profits are adversely affected.

However, not all consumers who desire revenge seek it online. The impact of the desire to seek revenge online is mediated by secondary appraisal processes. Because online revenge is a deliberate action, consumers engage in due deliberation, whether momentarily or over a period of time, before engaging in online revenge. Appraisal theorists argue that consumers often carry out secondary appraisals, which means that they evaluate their ability to take certain actions as a means of coping with a service failure (Lazarus, 1991). After a service failure and an initial recovery encounter, consumers often evaluate their own coping potential, the extent to which they feel they can manage the demands of the negative event, and likelihood of success for each

coping alternative (in this case, immediate, venting, and third-party online revenge). This research suggests that perceived control of the online revenge activity, perceived risk, and expectancy of reach are three key factors that influence the consumer's online revenge choice.

Perceived control is defined as a person's perception of how easy or difficult it would be to carry out an activity (Ajzen, 1991). In this research context, perceived control is the individual consumer's perceived ease or difficulty of engaging in an online revenge activity. Prior findings suggest that in the secondary appraisal process, perceived control involves outcome assessment of past experiences (Stephens & Gwinner, 1998, Dalakas, 2006). After encountering a service failure and initial recovery, the individual consumer often evaluates and makes a judgment about the availability of resources and opportunity to engage in coping behaviors (e.g., Ajzen, 2002, Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). For example, research on consumer misbehavior has revealed that when consumers perceive they have strong control over a misbehavior situation, they are more likely to engage in unacceptable behaviors such as shoplifting and software piracy (Chen, Pan, & Pan, 2009; Tonglet, 2000). Given the lesser amount of effort required to get revenge online, and the stronger perception of control in online contexts, it can be argued that the effects of desire on online revenge intentions would be mediated by perceived control.

Perceived risk is a multidimensional construct but can be viewed as composed of two major dimensions - performance and psychosocial (Bearden & Teel, 1980). When psychosocial risks are high, the consumer may be hesitant to engage even in complaining behaviors; however, when such risks are low, expressions of consumer dissatisfaction may be unrestrained (Bearden & Teel, 1980). In this context, perceived risklessness is the consumer evaluation of the relatively lower probability of adverse impacts of their actions. Consumers can evaluate the possible consequences of their revenge actions, especially in terms of their own exposure to future economic, social, and legal actions. If they determine that their revenge behaviors would not

cause further harm for them, they may conclude that their intended actions are relatively riskless. Perceived risklessness is a key factor influencing consumer misbehavior (Tonglet, 2000). Given the anonymity provided by the Internet and social media, the perceived risklessness of online revenge is much higher than it is for offline or direct acts of revenge where the consumer's identity cannot be easily concealed (Grégoire et al., 2010). Thus, the Internet and new media technologies enhance perceptions of perceived risklessness and increase the likelihood that a desire of revenge will translate into online revenge intentions.

Reach is a specific measure used in advertising, representing the number of viewers exposed to an advertisement in a given period of time. Compared to traditional media, the pervasiveness and ubiquity of the Internet, social media, and mobile technologies have ensured their reach is often not only quite high, but also strongly targeted. Also, compared to costly traditional media, consumers have access to new media technologies for little or no monetary cost. Moreover, content in such media is often quite permanent (as compared to ephemeral traditional advertising) and has a high pass-along characteristic (Lee, Ham & Kim 2013). The opportunity for viral transmission of posts, tweets, pages, links, blogs, videos, and other consumer-created content enhances the expectancy of reach of these media. Therefore, the expectancy of reach of new media technologies has a direct mediating effect on consumer desire for revenge and online revenge intentions.

Translating the above discussions into hypotheses, it is offered that:

H5a: *Perceived control will mediate the relationship between desire for revenge (DR) and online revenge intentions.*

H5b: *Perceived risklessness will mediate the relationship between DR and online revenge intentions.*

H5c: *Expectancy of reach will mediate the relationship between DR and online revenge intentions.*

Effects of different service failure types on desire for revenge and revenge behaviors

A service failure encounter represents those consumption events in which the service provided by a firm fails to meet the customer's expectation of a certain standard, and, therefore, is evaluated as dissatisfactory or as a stressful event (Dalakas, 2006; Stephens & Gwinner, 1998; Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins 1987). Prior research has shown that consumer evaluations of service failures depend upon the type of failure as well as the perceived severity (or magnitude) of the failure (Smith et al., 1999). Typically, as argued by Smith et al. (1999), firms engage in service recovery attempts and offer compensation that is either utilitarian (e.g., monetary) or symbolic (e.g., apology). However, in some instances, such recovery attempts are not made by the firm or are perceived by the consumer as falling short of what the firm should have done for appeasement (Joireman et al., 2013). In such instances, termed "double deviation," a failed recovery follows the failed service, thus leading to such negative emotions as anger and betrayal, therefore resulting in a desire for revenge (Joireman et al., 2013).

When the cause of a service failure is attributed to a firm, blame attributions trigger anger, frustration, and other negative emotions for the customer that reach strong levels of outrage (Gelbrich, 2010; Rosenman, 1991). Appraisal theorists suggest that such anger sets up a desire for retaliation that manifests itself in vengeful negative word-of-mouth and other revenge behaviors (Gelbrich, 2010; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Analysis of relevant extant literature on services suggests that different types of service failures would lead to varied consumer reactions (Bitner et al., 1990; Hoffman et al., 1995; Smith et al., 1999). Another line of research, when applied to responses to service failure, indicates that consumers place losses into different mental accounts that are either primarily economic or primarily social (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979;

Smith et al., 1999; Thaler, 1985). Service outcome failures may result in actual economic losses for the consumer (including opportunity costs) because the firm failed to perform the core expected service (e.g., an appliance repairperson does not come on the expected day). In contrast, service process failures (e.g., an encounter with a rude employee) may result in social loss for the consumer (Smith et al., 1999). The effects of these two different types of failures, leading to the primary appraisal processes and revenge outcomes, are depicted in Figure 1. When outcome failure occurs without appropriate economic compensation, appraisal theories suggest that consumers feel controlled by the firm responsible for the service (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). Alternately, cognitive appraisal theories suggest that process failures represent a goal-incongruent situation wherein the consumer's internal representation of the desired state is a marked departure from reality (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Lazarus, 1991).

In the case of service process failures, as compared to service outcome failures, when a specific external agency can be assigned as responsible for the failure, the distinction between the appraisal process and emotions is quite sharp (Soscia, 2007). This is particularly true in the case of service failures wherein the provider can be held responsible for the policies, practices, employee behaviors, and organizational culture that are the cause of service process failures. Therefore, the desire for revenge would be more prominent in cases of service process failures.

On the other hand, as situations of service outcome failure may entail greater economic or utilitarian losses, the consumer has a clearer sense of the extent of damage caused by such failures. In such cases, the consumer can more directly articulate the object of the revenge intentions (e.g., "My money was wasted," or "I never received my money back even though it was guaranteed"), and therefore can express the ideas more cogently on online sites. Because the consumer can handle these responses directly rather than resorting to the help of third parties, the translation of desire for revenge into more direct forms of online revenge intentions would be

more likely in the case of service outcome failures, as compared to service process failures. A few of the prior hypotheses on consumer appraisal and emotional responses highlighted differences in the impacts of service process failures in contrast to service outcome failures. Absent prior arguments and evidence on each of the links in the proposed model for other specific differences, the following general hypotheses are offered:

H6a: *In the event of service process failure, as compared to service outcome failure, consumer appraisals and emotions would contribute to a greater desire for revenge.*

H6b: *In the event of service process failure, as compared to service outcome failure, desire for revenge will lead to direct forms of online revenge intentions.*

National context and cognitive appraisals for revenge

Zourrig et al. (2009) propose a conceptual model of online revenge behaviors that takes cross-cultural factors into explicit consideration. The crux of their argument is that the appraisals and negative emotions are substantially different in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Appraisal theorists have suggested that cultural differences could affect various appraisal components such as goal incongruence (Lazarus, 1991). Zourrig et al. (2009) have made an important start toward a cross-cultural examination of consumer revenge intentions and behaviors; however, more focused research attention is needed in order to understand the impact of cross-national and cross-cultural forces on consumer desire for revenge and online revenge intentions.

Recent research on consumer rage has identified strong contrasts between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Patterson et al., 2016; Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013). Specifically, the studies argue that collectivistic cultures traditionally discourage public displays of emotion and that “individuals are expected to seek resolution to a conflict (e.g., an unsatisfactory service encounter) without losing their tempers” (Patterson et al., 2016; p. 245). Therefore, the view

garnered from the research is that such collectivistic cultures would be “less prone to rage emotions” (Patterson et al., 2016; p. 246).

However, in the context of rage, Patterson et al. (2016) contend that collectivistic Eastern cultures are more likely to exhibit rancorous and retaliatory rage emotions as compared to consumers in individualistic Western cultures. They base their explanations on the ways in which people relate to social groups (e.g., in-groups or out-groups), and the ways that initial negative emotions develop into rage. In collectivistic cultures, people may have fewer but deeper social relationships, while those in individualistic cultures belong to more social groups but with weaker in-group bonds (Patterson et al., 2016). As a consequence of this, in combination with low power distance, individualistic cultures tend to have a stronger emphasis on civility toward the larger society and therefore, would have less engagement with extreme forms of public anger. Similarly, in collectivistic cultures, the emphasis on harmony may contribute to negative emotions being “bottled up or masked in some way,” only to “eventually explode and lead to rage expressions” (Patterson et al., 2016; p.247). In the context of two collectivistic and two individualistic cultures, Patterson et al. (2016) found partial or full empirical support for the assertions that rancorous and retaliatory rage would be more prevalent in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures, and that consumers from collectivistic cultures would be more likely to engage in revenge activities than would consumers from individualistic cultures.

At the individual level, Triandis (1995) suggests that a person’s culture assigns different meanings of self to in-group and out-groups relationships. Consumers in a collectivist culture display greater affinity to in-group similarities (Triandis, 1998; Gudykunst et al., 1992). Previous evidence shows that people from in-groups in Eastern cultures are more likely to use indirect coping strategies, while individuals from out-group individualistic cultures prefer direct coping mechanisms (Hardie, Critchley, & Morris, 2006; Cross, 1995; Zourrig et al, 2015). Some studies

have also found that out-group Western consumers have a stronger tendency to apply efforts to protect themselves and their rights, as compared to consumers from in-group Eastern cultures (Poon, Michael, & Kevin, 2004; Mattila & Patterson, 2004).

While less is known about the cross-cultural differences in the mechanisms of cognitive appraisals and the formation of negative emotions, prior theory can be extended to argue that cultural factors would impact translation of a desire for revenge into specific revenge intentions. This body of reasoning and evidence supports the statement that more direct and vengeful revenge intentions would be found in collectivistic cultures rather than in individualist cultures. In this research, the nation of Jordan exhibits characteristics of Eastern cultures, and the United Kingdom is a typical example of a Western culture (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995). Both immediate and venting online revenge intentions are more direct than are third-party online revenge intentions. Therefore, it is offered that:

H7: In Eastern cultures, desire for revenge will be more strongly associated with (i) immediate online revenge intentions, and (ii) venting online revenge intentions, as compared to Western cultures.

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

To better understand the different triggers for consumer appraisals and emotions leading to a desire for revenge, this research implemented a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews with 32 consumers who confessed to retaliating against a service provider online. Participants were recruited through online advertisements in two anti-consumption and revenge groups with a presence on Facebook and represented a mix of genders, ages, employment and education.

Interviews were conducted through MSN Messenger - an online chat platform - and lasted about 30 to 45 minutes each. An online chat platform was deemed appropriate, given the sensitivity of revenge activities, voluntary basis of participation, and the focus on online revenge issues (Saunders et al, 2007). Following the method used by Funches, Markley, and Davis (2009), participants were asked to describe a critical incident that they experienced, including (1) their perspective on what happened with the firm and how they reacted; (2) factors that influenced their decision to use online platforms for revenge, and that determined which platform they selected for the revenge; and, (3) how they evaluated the impacts of online revenge (the process they went through).

The interview findings revealed that most incidents mentioned could be classified as process failure and outcome failure. Various constructs, later identified as having similarities to consumer cognitive evaluations were also found. Most importantly, the findings revealed various online revenges activities including Facebook status updates, tweets, creating Facebook groups, vindictive emails, vindictive reviews and vindictive complaints. These varied forms of online revenge were categorized as (i) direct confrontation with the offending company; (ii) seeking support from a third party; and, (iii) immediate release of emotions. The resulting revenge behaviors and categories used in the surveys are provided in the Appendix (C). Based on the above findings and inspired by prior viral online posts, two service failure scenarios were created, with types of failure events (process versus outcome) as noted in the Appendix (B). The service outcome failure scenario was about a hotel reservation that was not honored by the hotel, and the service process failure scenario involved damage to luggage and its contents by an airline. Both scenarios were modeled after two viral posts that are now used as examples of consumer revenge (Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan, 2008; Tripp and Grégoire, 2011). The selected scenarios were pretested using student groups and were approved by industry experts. They were

used in the context of two different country contexts - the UK and Jordan. Participants (N=30/country) assessed the realism of the scenarios on a 9-point rating scale. Both scenarios scored high on realism ($M_{\text{process}} = 8.33$; $M_{\text{outcome}} = 8.58$, $t(59) = 66.762$, $p < 0.001$).

Measures

Measures for the various constructs were developed based on previous research in the area of consumer revenge, with established scales adapted in most cases (see Appendix) and pretested with 30 MBA students who had indicated prior online revenge experience. Unless otherwise indicated, a 5-point Likert-type response format was used for all scales.

At the start of the questionnaire, respondents were presented with a definition of online revenge. After being exposed to both of the two service failure scenarios, they were asked to respond to the questionnaire items. Such descriptive scenarios have been used in service failure research (Grégoire et al., 2009, Tsarebkom & Struzhakova, 2013), in contrast to recall-based surveys, in order to minimize response bias due to memory lapses and to enable enacting of the actual service failures (McCullough et al, 2000). Apart from the items listed in the Appendix, participants were also asked questions on demographics and Internet use. The data collection employed a within-subjects design. Each participant was exposed to scenarios of two types of service failure for the purposes of studying the effects of outcome and process failure on the cognitive appraisal process.

Study 1

Sample

Using online advertising, 1351 students from a university in northeast England were approached to participate in the study. Of these, 210 (15.54%) volunteers completed the online questionnaire and 200 usable responses were obtained, for a final response rate of approximately 15%. According to Grégoire et al. (2010), this is both appropriate and comparable to general

response rates for online surveys. Grégoire et al. (2010) also note that response rates between 15% and 18% are very common across studies using online surveys in revenge research. A student sample was chosen because students represent a high proportion of users of the Internet and new technologies (Peterson & Merunka, 2014). Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 40 years, with 79% in the range of less than 30; 15% in the 30–39 age group; 3.5% in the age range of 40–49; 1.5% aged 50–59; and 1% above 60 years. Also, 51.5% of the respondents were male.

Results – Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (Amos 22) was performed to assess the measurement structure (see Appendix A for individual items and item loadings). Very few of the factor loadings were below 0.7, and convergent validity is indicated through examination of factor loadings and composite reliabilities (greater than 0.7). An examination revealed that the squared correlations between the constructs were less than their AVEs, thereby indicating discriminant validity. The overall fit of the measurement models were acceptable ($\chi^2/df_{\text{process}}=1.457$; $p=0.00$, TLI=0.94, CFI=0.95, RMSEA=0.04-0.055, SRMR= 0.065, and; $\chi^2/df_{\text{outcome}}=1.355$; $p=0.00$, TLI=0.92, CFI=0.965, RMSEA=0.034-0.05; SRMR=0.051).

Given the use of self-reported ratings, the presence of common methods bias was assessed using various techniques. In the Harman one-factor test, one factor explained only 20% of the variance, demonstrating a weak explanation of variances. In another test, a common method factor was included to examine the effects of the unmeasured latent method factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Those results show that the average substantively explained variance of the indicators (0.69) is far greater than the average method-based variance (0.023). The ratio of substantive variance to method variance was about 58:1. In addition, out of the 28 paths from common methods variance (CMV) to single indicator constructs, none were significant. Therefore, common methods bias is unlikely to be a serious concern in this study. Metric

invariance tests were conducted because of the two-country sample and two different types of failure (as shown Table 1) and overall results indicate invariance.

The means of the manipulation check measures were significantly different and in the desired directions ($p < 0.001$). Outcome failure yielded significantly lower satisfaction with the service recovery than in the case of process failure ($M_{\text{outcome}} = 5.084$, $M_{\text{process}} = 6.089$, $t = 5.916$, $p < 0.001$). Hence, there are indications that the manipulations were successful.

Insert Table 1 about here

Results – Structural Models

Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) approach was used to test models with direct effects and with mediation-only effects, and models with both direct and mediating effects. In the proposed model, the two types of service failures have different effects on the primary appraisal process and on negative emotions, and also have different effects on the desire for revenge, the secondary appraisal of ability, and the three types of online revenge intentions. Table 2 shows the standard path coefficients and t-values of the SEM estimation while Table 3 discussed later shows the relationship path differences between the two types of service failure within each country context.

Insert Table 2 about here

Effects of severity of service failure on perceived power and goal incongruence (H1)

H₁ predicted that the severity of service will positively influence consumer goal incongruence and will negatively influence perceived power in both events. Table 2 shows that in the outcome failure condition, the severity of service failure significantly influences perceived power ($\beta = -0.249$, $p < 0.001$), but negatively influences goal incongruence, although this effect is not significant ($\beta = -0.077$, $p > 0.05$). When process failure occurs, severity of service failure has a

weak impact on both perceived power and goal incongruence ($\beta=0.062$, $t=0.512$, $\beta =0.011$, $t=0.161$, $p>0.05$). Therefore, H_{1a} is only partially supported, while H_{1b} is rejected.

Effect of primary appraisal on negative emotions

The results show that goal incongruence has a weak positive influence on consumer perceived betrayal. In both service failure conditions, no significant effects were found between goal incongruence and helplessness. Both H_{2a} and H_{2b} are rejected.

For both types of service failure/recovery events, perceived power positively and significantly influenced perceived betrayal ($\beta_{Process}=0.275$, $\beta_{Outcome}=0.239$, $p<0.001$). Perceived power negatively influenced the participants' feelings of helplessness ($\beta_{Process}=-0.466$, $\beta_{Outcome}=-0.479$, $p<0.001$). These results show that perceived power appears as an important primary cognition - that is to say, is the most likely to directly influence perceived betrayal and helplessness in both types of failure/recovery events. Therefore, H_{3a} and H_{3b} are supported.

Effect of negative emotions on desire for revenge

For both service failure types, helplessness has a positive effect on perceived betrayal that leads to a higher DR. Table 2 shows that helplessness has a significant effect on perceived betrayal in both events indicating support for H_{4c} . The effects of perceived betrayal on desire for revenge are significant as well (H_{4a}). However, the effect of helplessness on DR is significant only in the process failure situation.

Direct and mediation effects of secondary appraisal on three types of revenge

Direct impacts of DR on the three types of online revenge were first tested, and then followed by the mediation effects of secondary appraisal. In both service failure events, DR was found to have significant effects on immediate online revenge ($\beta_{outcome}=0.437$, $p<.001$, $\beta_{process}=0.279$, $p<.001$), followed by third-party focused online revenge ($\beta_{outcome}=0.377$, $p<.001$,

$\beta_{\text{process}} = 0.137$, $p < .001$) and venting online revenge ($\beta_{\text{outcome}} = 0.335$, $p < .001$, $\beta_{\text{process}} = 0.214$, $p < .001$).

H_{5a} , H_{5b} , and H_{5c} stress the mediation effects of the secondary appraisal (i.e., perceived control, perceived risklessness, and expectancy of reach) on the relationship between DR and each of three types of online revenge. In the process failure scenario, results confirm that expectancy of reach partially mediates the relationship between DR and both immediate and venting online revenge, and fully mediates the relationship between DR and third-party revenge. When process failure occurs, perceived control has no mediation effect on three types of online revenge. Perceived risklessness was found to only partially mediate the relationship between DR and immediate online revenge.

When outcome failures occur, only expectancy of reach had a partial mediating effect on the relationship between DR and venting, and DR third-party online revenge. Expectancy of reach did not mediate the relationship between DR and immediate online revenge. Perceived control had a partial mediating effect on DR and third-party online revenge only. Perceived risk had no effect on the relationship between DR and the three types of online revenge.

When using SEM multiple group analysis to compare the context differences between two types of service failure (as shown in Table 3), significant differences in the path relationships were found for the paths of: (1) severity of service failure \rightarrow perceived power ($\beta_{\text{outcome}} = -0.155$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta_{\text{process}} = 0.059$, $p > 0.05$, $Z = 3.566$, $p < 0.01$); (2) helplessness \rightarrow DR ($\beta_{\text{outcome}} = -0.035$, $p > 0.05$, $\beta_{\text{process}} = 0.086$, $p < 0.001$, $Z = -2.03$, $p < 0.05$); (3) perceived betrayal \rightarrow DR ($\beta_{\text{outcome}} = 0.957$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta_{\text{process}} = 0.360$, $p < 0.001$, $Z = 5.79$, $p < 0.01$); and (4) perceived risklessness \rightarrow immediate online revenge ($\beta_{\text{outcome}} = 0.072$, $p > 0.05$, $\beta_{\text{process}} = 0.370$, $p < 0.001$, $Z = 2.543$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, there is some support for the different elicitations of appraisals,

emotions, and revenge in the case of outcome and process failure events (H6a and H6b are partially supported).

Insert Table 3 about here

Discussion

Study 1 provides an initial support for the proposed model and hypotheses. The two types of service failures contributed to differences in the cognitive appraisal processes and online revenge intentions. Compared to process failures, when an outcome failure occurs, consumers are more likely to engage in all three types of online revenge but are most likely to engage in immediate online revenge. Also, customers have a higher desire for revenge, feel more dissatisfied, and evaluate the service failure more seriously when they encounter outcome failures. In both service failure conditions, expectancy of reach mediates the relationship between DR and venting, and DR and third-party focused online revenge. Expectancy of reach only mediates the relationship between DR and immediate revenge when process failure occurs. Interestingly, perceived risk only mediates the relationship between DR and immediate revenge when process failure occurs. Consumers feel more betrayed in process failure than in outcome failure. When outcome failures occur, perceived control mediates the relationship between DR and third-party online revenge.

In summary, Study 1 supports three major contentions. First, the two types of service failures are key antecedents that evoke different consumer cognitive processes, which lead to different types of online revenge. Second, perceived power is a key primary cognition in both types of failures, which subsequently leads to customer helplessness, perceived betrayal, and desire for revenge. Finally, expectancy of reach is the key secondary cognition in the case of process failures, and mediates the relationship between desire for revenge and all three types of

online revenge. However, in the outcome failure situation, consumer expectancy of reach alters the relationship between DR and venting and, DR and third-party online revenge.

Study 2

In order to test cross-cultural differences of the proposed model, Study 2 was conducted in a different national context. While prior research studies do not reveal explicit cross-national or cross-cultural differences, the theoretical arguments noted previously suggest that cognitive appraisals and online revenge intentions would differ across contexts. Respondents from Jordan were recruited through online advertising. Jordan differs from the UK in both economic and cultural factors; however, the levels of Internet penetration and use are quite similar.

Sample

Study 2 used the same design and method as before to collect data from Jordan. Participants (n=217) were recruited from a university in Jordan through online advertising. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 40 years, with 78.8% being less than 30 years old and 20.7% in the range of ages 30 to 39. The sample was 66.8% female.

Measures

Similar to Study 1, CFA results showed good fit, composite reliabilities of constructs were acceptable and convergent and discriminant validities were also indicated. Thus, all measures demonstrated unidimensionality, acceptable internal consistency, and adequate validity. Common method bias tests did not reveal any issues. The Appendix shows reliabilities and factor loadings for this sample as well.

Results – Structural Models

In terms of the impact of the different service failure types, consumers in Jordan are more likely engage in third-party online revenge in cases of process failure, as compared to outcome failure. Although a similar pattern occurs in the UK sample, there were no significant differences

between the two types of failure conditions in the Jordan sample. There is evidence of similar levels of venting online revenge in both service failure conditions, although it is not significant. In contrast to the UK sample, consumers in Jordan are more likely to engage in immediate online revenge when process failure occurs than in the case of outcome failure. However, the effects are not significantly different.

Results show that consumer perceived power is much higher in process failure than in outcome failure. The Jordanian consumer has a higher expectation of reach of their online generated revenge when process failures occur, as compared to outcome failures. On the other hand, UK consumers have a similar expectancy of reach in both failures cases. Also, Jordanian consumers feel more helplessness when a process failure occurs than in the case of outcome failures. However, in the UK sample, consumers feel more helplessness when outcome failure occurs than when process failures occur. Also in contrast to the UK consumers, Jordanian consumers evaluate goal incongruence similarly in both service failure events. UK consumers, in comparison, evaluate goal incongruence to be much higher in situations of outcome failure, as compared to process failures.

As Table 3 shows, most of the hypotheses are supported in the Jordan sample. H_{1a} and H_{1b} are rejected in the Jordan sample, though H_{1a} is partially supported in the UK sample. H_{2a} and H_{2b} are rejected in both samples. Similar to the UK sample, the results (Tables 2 and 3) reveal that H_{3a} , H_{3b} , H_{4a} , H_{4b} , and H_6 are fully supported in the Jordan sample. The key difference is the partial support for H_{4b} in the UK sample and for H_{3a} in the Jordan sample.

In contrast to Study 1, when Jordanian consumers encountered outcome failure there were no mediation effects of expectancy of reach, perceived risk, and perceived control on the relationship between DR and the three types of online revenge. However, similar to Study 1, when process failure occurs the expectancy of reach partially mediates immediate and third-party

focused online revenge, but does not mediate the impact of DR on venting online revenge.

Perceived risklessness mediates the relationship between DR and both immediate and venting revenge. In contrast to the UK sample, perceived control partially mediates the relationship between DR and IR. H_{5a} , H_{5b} , and H_{5c} are partially supported.

Cross-cultural differences

When comparing across country contexts in the case of outcome failure using SEM multiple group analysis, significant differences were found in the following relationships: (a) DR → TR ($Z=2.034$, $p<0.001$); (b) betrayal → DR ($Z=3.191$, $p<0.01$); (c) DR → perceived risklessness ($Z=2.721$, $p<0.01$); DR → expected reach ($Z=3.134$, $p<0.01$); DR → perceived control ($Z=3.526$, $p<0.01$); (d) perceived power → helplessness ($Z=2.373$, $p<0.05$); (e) severity → goal incongruence ($Z=2.078$, $p=0.029$); (f) severity → power ($Z=3.864$; $p<0.001$); (g) perceived power → perceived betrayal ($Z=2.27$, $p<0.05$); (h) helplessness → betrayal ($Z=2.003$, $p<0.05$); (i) helplessness → DR ($Z=0.289$, $P<0.05$); (j) perceived risklessness → venting online review ($Z=1.782$, $p<0.10$); expectancy of reach → venting online revenge ($Z=1.755$, $p<0.01$); perceived control → Third-party online revenge ($Z=1.933$, $p<0.10$). Contextual moderation was found in DR → IR ($\beta_{\text{outcome}}=0.1512$, $t=1.9914$, $p=0.471$, $R^2=0.2660$); DR → VR ($\beta_{\text{outcome}}=0.1749$, $t=2.0966$, $p=0.0366$, $R^2=0.1530$), and; perceived betrayal → DR ($\beta_{\text{outcome}}=0.179$, $t=2.117$, $p=0.035$, $R^2=0.423$).

In the condition of process failure, significant cross-context differences in the path relationships were found in the paths of: (a) helplessness → DR ($Z=3.007$, $p<0.001$); (b) DR → expectancy of reach ($Z=1.626$, $p<0.001$); (c) perceived power → helplessness ($Z=1.575$, $p<0.05$); (d) perceived control → immediate online revenge ($Z=2.976$, $p<0.001$), and perceived risklessness → immediate online revenge ($Z=2.337$, $p<0.05$). The national context moderates the

path DR → third-party online revenge ($\beta_{\text{process}} = -0.303$, $t = -2.074$, $p = 0.039$, $R^2 = 0.103$) and power → helplessness ($\beta_{\text{process}} = -0.395$, $t = -2.745$, $p = 0.006$, $R^2 = 0.256$).

Discussion

In Study 2, some support is obtained for the argument that outcome and process failures contribute to different primary and secondary appraisals. In summary, for both the UK and for Jordan, when process failure occurs, consumers are more likely to engage in third-party online revenge. There are generally no national differences in the pattern of online cognitive appraisal process. However, such differences exist when consumers feel they have more power, which may lead directly to immediate online revenge and venting. When process failure occurs, Jordanian consumers tend to feel less helpless than UK consumers, and UK consumers are more likely to focus on the secondary appraisal process. Study 2 again confirms the following. First, the type of service failure is a key antecedent that triggers different consumer cognitive processes, which leads to different types of online revenge. Second, perceived power is a key primary cognition following the two types of failure, which subsequently leads to customer's perceived betrayal and desire for revenge. Finally, perceived risk and expectancy of reach are two key secondary cognitions that follow process and outcome failure, and which, in a different ways, mediate the relationship between desire for revenge and both immediate and third-party online revenge.

CONCLUSION

The many ways in which the Internet and online social media have empowered consumers represent a major challenge for firms in situations of service failure and failed recovery. Consumers are proactively using online and social media platforms to “get even” with firms, even without the firms' knowledge. This research tested and presents a comprehensive model of cognitive appraisal processes that lead to consumers' intention to seek revenge through

online platforms. More importantly, this research reveals the impact of different types of service failures on the cognitive appraisal process and on revenge intentions. Further, this research tested the proposed model in two different country contexts.

There is a steadily growing research stream that explores the antecedents of consumer revenge behaviors, as well as other conditions and constraints on consumer revenge (Grégoire et al., 2009; Haj-Salem & Chebat, 2014; Joireman, et al., 2013; Kähr et al., 2016; Zourrig et al., 2009). This current research utilizes the theoretical basis and measurement approaches of prior research to offer a comprehensive model of cognitive appraisals and emotional elicitations that contribute to consumer desire for revenge. Consistent with prior research in this area, evaluations of service failure and recovery are more likely to elicit negative emotions such as perception of betrayal that, in turn, to lead to a desire for revenge (Grégoire et a, 2010; Haj-Salem, & Chebat, 2014).

This research made a distinction between two types of service failures - outcome and process - and explored whether the appraisal processes and emotions remain similar in both failure contexts, as well as across cultural contexts. The findings reveal that outcome failures are viewed as more severe than process failures, at least in the context of individualistic Western countries. Extant research has only recently made forays into a much deeper cross-cultural understanding of the consumer cognitive appraisal process, of emotional elicitations for revenge, and of the cognitive evaluation of intended actions - all of which are the empirical focus of this research. The findings offer insight into the extent to which emotions and secondary appraisal processes (cognitive evaluation of intended actions) play a similar role across failure types and country contexts.

Also, in contrast to most prior research (e.g., Grégoire et al., 2009, 2010; Gelbrich, 2010; Surachartkumtonkun et al, 2013), this research examines revenge intentions rather than revenge

behaviors. It is plausible to conclude that very few consumers desiring revenge may be acting on their impulses. Therefore, with a focus on intentions rather than behaviors, this research taps into a wider set of respondents who are committed to revenge but also understand the consequences of any actions they might choose to carry out.

Prior research has underscored the importance of examining different types, modes, and expressions of revenge, ranging from a relatively passive negative word-of-mouth to extreme rage and aggression (Kähr et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2016). The findings in this research are quite revealing about the accessibility, prevalence, and growth of online platforms as a forum for revenge. Given the expected reach of such platforms, the relative permanence (as many posts cannot be deleted), and the potential for causing relatively anonymous damage to firms and brands, online revenge is already becoming a “weapon of choice” for disillusioned and angry customers. The findings suggest that a desire for revenge often translates into direct and confrontational forms of online revenge intentions.

More importantly, the findings support an extension of cognitive appraisal theory, establishing a secondary appraisal process involving evaluation of intended revenge action through online channels - a process that supports consumer decisions about stressful conditions that may result, and about whether they are willing to accept those consequences.

The research findings reported herein have several important insights for practice as well. First, firms cannot remain oblivious to the potential of damaging acts caused by consumers’ desires and intentions for revenge. While it is impossible to satisfy all consumers, firms must make legitimate, credible, and serious attempts to ensure consumer satisfaction with service design, delivery, and outcomes. Rapid and effective complaint management has often been suggested as the resolution for instances when consumers express their dissatisfaction, but equally important is the development of proactive methods of redress for identified failure

situations. Though customers' blame attributions may sometimes be unwarranted, firms that are compassionate toward consumers' actual and perceived harm and that are quick with redress may be able to effectively diffuse situations that could escalate into instances of revenge and rage (Surachartkumtomkun et al., 2013).

Second, firms need to proactively monitor the online space (however arduous this may seem) to find consumer posts and venting of negative emotions. Increasing the availability of and accessibility to online platforms and sites where consumers can interact with the firm and release their emotions could help reduce the negative impacts of revenge behaviors. Consumers are becoming increasingly savvy about technology, including being able to engage in creative video production for revenge. Therefore, firms must also expend adequate resources and redress mechanisms to obtain technological systems and competencies to address potential online revenge. Also, the creative talents of consumers themselves could be harnessed to discover and develop potential solutions to service outcome and process failures.

Finally, the vast areas of similarities in cross-cultural appraisal and emotional elicitation may serve as good news for firms implementing multinational service strategies. The ubiquity of online platforms and the similarities in technologies across countries has also probably rendered online revenge intentions quite similar across different contexts. Thus, predictions of revenge circumstances and proposals for restraining revenge behaviors can be more generally implemented.

The findings and implications suggested herein must also be considered in light of several limitations of this research. First, the choice of the two cultural contexts was based more on convenience rather than on a careful sampling of all available national contexts. Data collection constraints frequently restrict the selection of national and cultural contexts to those that are not only more readily available, but also those wherein construct equivalence could be

more readily established and measurement invariance could be assessed. While the selection of a UK sample may not be surprising, the selection of Jordan as a site for replicating the model is also, in retrospect, quite justifiable. Despite differences in economic size and per-capita GDP, Internet and mobile penetration rates in both the UK and Jordan are relatively high, and both have relatively low levels of Internet censorship (Barone 2015). At the same time, however, they differ sharply along various underlying cultural dimensions that may be relevant for this study, even though such cultural dimensions were not explicitly considered. A careful consideration of specific cultural dimensions in contexts that are sharply different (e.g., individualist versus collectivistic) could be a useful objective as a focus of future studies.

Another limitation of this study is the restriction of scenarios for types of service failure to only two major forms. While outcome and process scenarios were carefully developed and pre-tested for their realism prior to use, common experience reveals a wide range of service failures that may be variations of the two major types used here and may even be types that are quite distinct from these. While the classification of the failures into outcome and process failures do capture a host of service failure situations, the growth of the service industry over the last few decades will likely provide other instances of failure that are common but not quite well-researched. Also, the scenarios of types of service failure are somewhat context-specific in terms of airline and hotel service, so that the findings could also be context-specific. Future research could engage in testing models of service failure, failed recovery, and online revenge intentions and behaviors in different service contexts.

Yet another limitation could be the focus on only three types of online revenge behaviors. While these three forms of online revenge capture a wide range of revenge behaviors, future research could identify more subtle variations within each type of online revenge mode. Also, less is known about factors that may contribute to the viral spread of online revenge actions.

Though there are specific instances of online revenge actions finding a viral audience, for the vast majority of consumers such widespread reach and attention for their revenge remains a hope rather than a reality. This may be good news for firms at present, but without detailed knowledge of the impact of various online revenge mechanisms and the factors conducive to vindictive words-of-mouth “going viral,” firms may be operating under the proverbial Damocles’ sword. Future research could integrate interdisciplinary conceptualizations and empirical findings in order to identify factors that could contribute to different types of online revenge behaviors as well as factors that contribute to their viral spread.

A final limitation could lie in the use of within-subjects designs. Since each participant responded to both service outcome and service failure conditions, there was greater power obtained with limited sample sizes. However, future research may explore each condition separately in a between-subjects design and test more elaborate models.

Despite these limitations, this study makes important contributions to the understanding of consumer use of new media in general, and of the specific use of the Internet and social media, particularly for negative word-of-mouth. To summarize, this paper extends existing models of the impact of service failure types to the context of online revenge intentions. Findings reveal that process failure events are more likely to contribute to consumers’ secondary appraisal process once a desire for revenge is awakened. The similarity of results for cross-cultural contexts suggests a wider generalizability of the model.

This research has revealed that online platforms can be a potent outlet for confrontational coping strategies, including vindictive word-of-mouth and more general online revenge behaviors. As the prevalence and spread of the Internet and new media continues to expand at a rapid rate, it is possible that online revenge behaviors could become a potential new source of empowerment to redress the balance of power between powerful mega-corporations and helpless

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individual consumers. However, firms should continue to focus on appropriate services design, delivery, and recovery, so that consumer disappointment and regret do not lead to revenge intentions and actions.

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Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

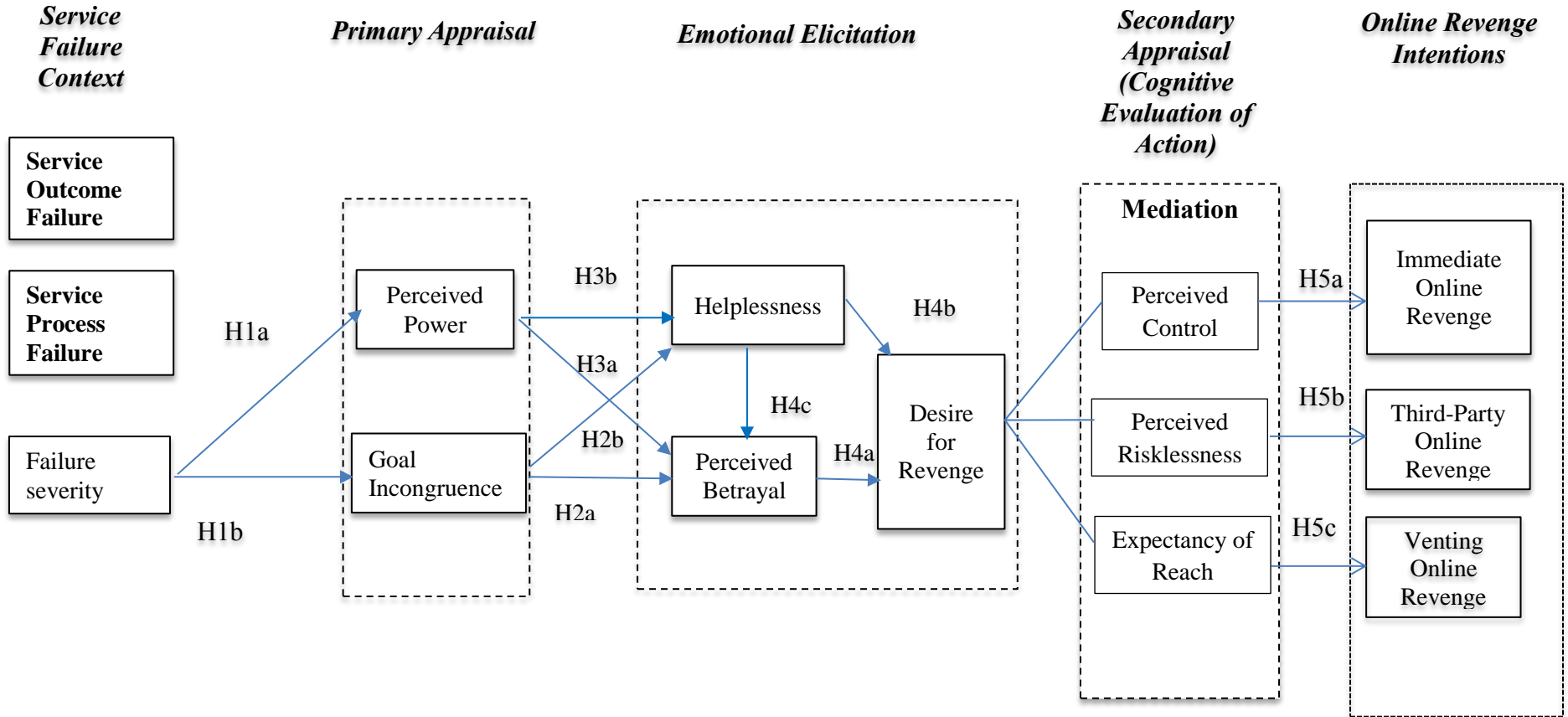


Table 1: Measurement Invariance Tests for UK Versus Jordan in Outcome and Process failure

Model Tested	Model Fit Measures					Model Difference		
	χ^2	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	<i>p</i>
<i>Outcome failure</i>								
Configural invariance	1305.235	914	0.000	0.034	0.951			
Metric Invariance	1334.401	938	0.000	0.032	0.961	29.166	24	0.214
<i>Process failure</i>								
Configural invariance	1277.499	906	0.000	0.031	0.954			
Metric Invariance	1309.342	930	0.000	0.031	0.953	31.843	24	0.131

Table 2: SEM Results

Hypothesized Relationship	UK Sample			Jordan Sample		
	Outcome Failure	Process Failure	Hypothesis is Support	Outcome Failure	Process Failure	Hypothesis is Support
	Estimate	Estimate		Estimate	Estimate	
H1a: Severity → Perceived power	-0.249***	0.064	Partially supported	-0.007	-0.018	Rejected
H1b: Severity → Goal incongruence	-0.077	-0.012	Rejected	0.126	-0.020	Rejected
H2a: Goal incongruence → Perceived betrayal	-0.063	-0.075	Rejected	-0.028	-0.069	Rejected
H2b: Goal incongruence → Helplessness	-0.077	0.065	Rejected	0.019	-0.052	Rejected
H3a: Perceived power → Perceived betrayal	0.239***	0.275***	Supported	0.281***	0.068	Partially supported
H3b: Perceived power → Helplessness	-0.479***	-0.466***	Supported	-0.427***	-0.216***	Supported
H4a: Perceived betrayal → DR	0.739***	0.323***	Supported	0.769***	0.706***	Supported
H4b: Helplessness → DR	-0.048	0.125*	Partially Supported	0.089***	-0.130*	Supported
H4c: Helplessness → Perceived betrayal	0.531***	0.422***	Supported	0.398***	0.347***	Supported

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10

Table 3: Multiple Group Analysis Results

	UK Sample			Jordan Sample		
	Outcome	Process	DIF	Outcome	Process	DIF
	Estimate	Estimate	z-score	Estimate	Estimate	z-score
Severity → Perceived power	-0.155***	0.059	-3.556***	-0.028	-0.042	-0.256
Severity → Goal incongruence	-0.038	-0.003	-0.900	0.036*	-0.001	-1.360
Perceived Power → Helplessness	-0.771***	-0.674***	-0.074	-0.572***	-0.500***	0.616
Goal incongruence → Helplessness	-0.070	0.237	-1.174	0.051	-0.082	-0.562
Perceived power → Perceived betrayal	0.232***	0.242***	-0.116	0.327***	0.198***	-1.141
Goal incongruence → Perceived betrayal	0.000	-0.164	1.003	-0.094	-0.152	-0.289
Helplessness → Perceived betrayal	0.294***	0.283***	0.188	0.390***	0.268***	-1.432
Helplessness → DR	-0.035	0.086***	-2.03**	0.074**	-0.012	-1.918*
Perceived betrayal → DR	0.957***	0.360***	5.79***	0.388***	0.389***	0.024
DR → Perceived control	0.286***	0.292***	-0.063	0.004	0.073	1.006
DR → Perceived risklessness	0.236***	0.230***	0.057	0.137*	0.148	0.087
DR → Expectancy of reach	0.396***	0.411***	-0.152	0.108*	0.273***	1.587
DR → Immediate online revenge	0.447***	0.336***	1.036	0.724***	0.392***	-2.544**
DR → Venting online revenge	0.374***	0.266***	0.932	0.559***	0.444***	-0.703
DR → Third-party online revenge	0.325***	0.167**	1.124	0.906***	0.621***	-1.812*
Perceived control → Immediate online revenge	-0.007	-0.071	0.518	-0.211	0.232	1.869*
Perceived control → Venting online revenge	-0.044	0.147	-1.418	-0.092	0.118	0.859
Perceived control → Third-party online revenge	0.030	-0.135	1.167	0.038	0.426***	1.982**
Perceived risklessness → Immediate online revenge	0.072	0.370***	-2.543**	0.067	0.106	0.300
Perceived risklessness → Venting online revenge	-0.036	0.015	-0.899	0.230**	0.339***	0.828
Perceived risklessness → Third-party online revenge	0.084	0.205*	1.027	0.099	0.268***	1.615
Expectancy of reach → Immediate online revenge	0.105	0.019	0.725	0.132	0.178**	0.356
Expectancy of reach → Venting online revenge	0.248***	0.133	0.885	0.202*	-0.053	-1.586
Expectancy of reach → Third-party online revenge	0.095	0.091	0.029	0.211*	0.229**	0.111

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10

Appendix

A. Key Constructs, Scale Reliabilities, and Sample Items

<i>Constructs and Sample Items</i>	<i>UK</i>		<i>Jordan</i>	
	<i>CR</i>		<i>CR</i>	
	<i>Loading (λ)</i>		<i>Loading (λ)</i>	
	<i>Process</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<i>Desire for Revenge</i> (source: Grégoire et al., 2010); 6 items	0.912	0.937	0.898	0.939
- I want to cause inconvenience to the ...[type of firm]	0.873	0.909	0.813	0.853
- I want to punish ... [type of firm] ... in some way	0.589	0.867	0.786	0.859
- I want to make ...[type of firm] ...get what it deserved	0.756	0.832	0.757	0.847
- I want to cause irritation to the...[type of firm]...	0.888	0.870	0.747	0.877
- I want to get even with ...[type of firm]	0.862	0.810	0.778	0.865
- I want to take action to get ...[type of firm]...in trouble	0.781	0.770	0.750	0.784
<i>Perceived Risklessness</i> (source: Kraut, 1976; Klemke, 1982, Shanahan and Hyman, 2010); 4 items	0.910	0.908	0.840	0.768
- If I commit online revenge no authority will catch me	0.893	0.879	0.861	0.823
- Nothing will happen if I get caught committing online revenge	0.842	0.856	0.797	0.721
- If I commit online revenge no authority will know it's me	0.826	0.852	0.875	0.866
- Nobody ever gets in trouble for committing online revenge	0.826	0.787	0.826	0.852
<i>Perceived Control</i> (source: Ajzen, 1991, Huang et al., 2010); 4 items	0.920	0.919	0.873	0.869
- I have the knowledge to get revenge online	0.861	0.885	0.804	0.773
- Getting revenge online is entirely within my control	0.849	0.834	0.815	0.875
- I have the ability to get revenge online	0.835	0.828	0.829	0.804
- I have the resources to get revenge online	0.898	0.890	0.729	0.696
<i>Expectancy of Reach</i> (source: Obeidat and Xiao, 2013); 3 items	0.904	0.904	0.895	0.896
- Using the Internet to get revenge will let my story reach a lot of people	0.883	0.871	0.846	0.878
- Using the Internet to get revenge will spread the word about my misadventure with the offending firm	0.815	0.821	0.835	0.751
- Using the Internet to get revenge will make public the behaviors and practices of the offending firm	0.913	0.917	0.898	0.945
<i>Perceived Power</i> (source: Grégoire et al., 2010); 4 items	0.918	0.918	0.826	0.856
- The stronger my conviction, the more I would have been able get my way with... [type of firm]	0.853	0.885	0.660	0.716
- I would have had the ability to influence the decisions made by the ...[type of firm]	0.870	0.855	0.850	0.822
- Because I would have a strong conviction of being right, I would have been able to convince the airlines employees	0.869	0.905	0.673	0.699
- I would have had leverage over the airlines	0.841	0.787	0.752	0.847

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<i>Perceived Betrayal</i> (source: Grégoire and Fisher, 2008); 5 items	0.925	0.885	0.888	0.956
- I feel lied to	0.852	0.798	0.851	0.932
- I feel betrayed	0.820	0.760	0.757	0.896
- I feel cheated	0.864	0.807	0.723	0.881
- I feel that the ...[type of firm]... attempted to take advantage of me	0.857	0.753	0.773	0.894
- I feel that the ...[type of firm]... tried to abuse me	0.823	0.770	0.807	0.910
<i>Helplessness</i> (source: Gelbrich, 2009); 3 items	0.924	0.935	0.858	0.862
- In this situation, I would feel helpless	0.924	0.931	0.862	0.860
- In this situation, I would feel defenseless	0.827	0.883	0.671	0.820
- In this situation, I would feel powerless	0.934	0.914	0.906	0.785
<i>Goal Incongruent/congruent</i> (source: Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002); 4 items	0.808	0.961	0.951	0.811
- I am satisfied with the procedure and means employed by the ...[type of firm] to respond to the problem	0.919	0.913	0.959	0.518
- I am satisfied with the compensation offered by the ...[type of firm]	0.683	0.960	0.911	0.841
- I am satisfied with the way...[type of firm]...has handled and responded to the problem	0.832	0.904	0.858	0.904
- In this specific occasion ...[type of firm]...has provided me with a satisfactory answer to the problem	0.676	0.931	0.911	0.910
<i>Severity of Service Failure</i> (Source: Smith, Bolton, and Wagner, 1999); 3 items	0.987	0.989	0.880	0.976
- This event caused me inconvenience	0.983	0.985	0.656	0.963
- This event caused me aggravation	0.986	0.987	0.866	0.966
- This event caused me problems	0.975	0.980	0.963	0.965
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	1.457	1.355	1.349	1.447
P value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
CFI	0.951	0.965	0.954	0.954
GFI	0.831	0.837	0.849	0.833
AGFI	0.791	0.802	0.816	0.800
LO90	0.040	0.034	0.032	0.038
HI90	0.055	0.050	0.047	0.052
RMSEA	0.031	0.042	0.040	0.045
SRMR	0.065	0.051	0.065	0.060

B. Scenarios

Scenario One (Process failure):

You are travelling on an important trip. During the flight a fellow passenger informs you that the airline baggage handlers are tossing passengers bags with disregard to their contents. Your bags contain valuable personal items, including your personal laptop. You complained to the flight crew, who claimed your bag should be okay. After your complaints to the flight crew were met

with indifference, upon arrival you discover that your laptop and other items were severely damaged. You went to the luggage counter to complain and ask for compensation. However, you were told that you need to complain to the airline company. After you sent numerous complaints to the airlines, asking for compensation and damages, over a period of months, the airlines still refused to cover your costs or offer any sorts of compensation, suggesting that the whole incident was not their fault.

Scenario Two (Outcome failure):

You are travelling on an important trip. You arrive at the hotel at approximately 10:00 p.m. and go to the front desk to check in. The representative at the front desk looks up your prepaid reservation and rudely informs you that the hotel is overbooked and you will have to stay at another hotel (several miles away) for the night, even though you had confirmed your booking the day before. After complaining to the management, they still could not find you a room, and did not offer any apology or compensation.

C. Measurement of Online Revenge Intentions

After reading the scenarios, participants were asked to indicate the likelihood of revenge, using 8 different platforms, and rating them on a 1 (most unlikely) to 5 (most likely) scale. Average means were computed and used in the hypotheses testing.

The eight platforms were grouped as shown below.

<i>Immediate online revenge</i>	<i>Third-party online revenge</i>	<i>Venting online revenge</i>
Facebook (Status updates)	Complaining to a consumer website.	Creating a Facebook anti-consumption group about the firm
Twitter (Tweets)	Writing a review to a consumer website.	Creating a website about my experience with the firm
Vindictive complaining to the firm's Facebook page/group		
Sending vindictive emails to the firm		