EXAMINING REVENGE AND FORGIVENESS INTENTIONS IN RESPONSE TO SERVICE FAILURES: INSIGHTS FROM THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines the impact of recovery methods and service failure severity on revenge and forgiveness intentions following service failures, within the framework of appraisal theory.
Methodology/Design/Approach – A recall approach was employed to conduct online surveys, prompting respondents to reflect on service failures experienced in the past six months. The collected data was analyzed using structural equation modeling.
Findings – The study found that apology, compensation, and failure severity influence the recovery satisfaction. This, in turn, has a positive effect on forgiveness intentions and a negative effect on revenge intentions. Moreover, failure severity negatively affects forgiveness intentions and positively affects revenge intentions. In terms of forgiveness intentions, recovery satisfaction is more influential, while in terms of revenge intentions, failure severity is more influential.
Originality of the research – This research provides new insights into consumer forgiveness and revenge intentions in the hospitality context, with a particular focus on the effect of failure severity, which has been neglected in previous studies.
Keywords Service Failures; Revenge Intentions; Forgiveness Intentions; Failure Severity

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INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of the hospitality industry, such as intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, simultaneous production and consumption (Zeithaml et al., 1985; Tung et al., 2017; Tsao, 2018), have both made service failures inevitable (Koç, 2019; Sreejesh et al., 2019) and have led the issue to remain on the agenda for more than 40 years (Andreassen & Best, 1977; Tengilimoglu & Ozturk, 2024). The fact that awareness that it is impossible to avoid service failures in the hospitality industry (Sreejesh et al., 2019) has encouraged related studies (Lee, 2018; Cheng et al., 2019; Jin et al., 2019) to focus on managing the negative consequences of service failures and transforming them into positive outcomes, such as customer loyalty and repurchase intention, rather than avoiding them in a complete manner. Although the possible consequences of service failures and the factors that may affect these consequences have been widely discussed with various theories and arguments (Lin et al., 2018), service failures are still considered a major problem in the hospitality industry (Jin et al., 2019; Guchait et al., 2019).

In the context of expectancy theory, service failure is defined as a gap between the customer's initial expectations and their perception of the actual service provided (Parasuraman et al., 1991). This gap represents a fundamental source of customer dissatisfaction (Lopez & Silva, 2015; Cheng et al., 2019), whereby the perceived quality of the service provided falls below the anticipated standards, resulting in negative customer outcomes such as decreased customer trust, loyalty and repurchase intentions (Boshoff, 1997; Hoffman & Chung, 1999; Kuo & Wu, 2012), switching provider (Kim et al., 2012), sharing negative reviews (Lin et al., 2018; Hur & Jang, 2019), complaints to third parties (Blodgett et al., 1997; Rojas et al, 2015), and customer revenge (Grégoire et al., 2009; Hur & Jang, 2019), which threaten the survival of hospitality enterprises (Koç, 2019). Therefore, several authors (Zhao et al., 2014; Manu & Sreejesh, 2020) believe that it is necessary for organizations to develop effective recovery methods against service failures in order to survive.

Service failures lead to the expectation of recovery on the part of customers, due to the social and economic losses that result from such incidents (Zemke & Bell, 2000; Obeidat et al., 2017). Customer satisfaction can be restored by meeting these expectations through effective recovery methods such as compensation and apology (Ding & Lii, 2016). Thus, only service failures are inevitable due to the nature of the hospitality industry (Levesque & McDougall, 2000; Sreejesh et al., 2019) and customer dissatisfaction can be avoided by implementing effective recovery methods (Kozub et al., 2014; Lee, 2018; Vaerenberg et al., 2019). For instance, Jung and Seock (2017) found that successful recovery methods overcome dissatisfaction and lead to recovery satisfaction, which is defined as a second satisfaction in the context of service failure. Similarly, Tengilimoğlu and Öztürk (2024) stated that satisfaction can be reassured by meeting customers' monetary and non-monetary recovery expectations in the recovery process. Furthermore, previous studies showed that successful recovery methods transform the negative consequences of service failures into positive outcomes such as trust (La & Choi, 2012; Bacile et al., 2018), loyalty (Murphy et al., 2015; Das et al., 2019), repurchase (Cheng et al., 2019), strengthening customer relationships (Smith et al., 1999; Park et al., 2014), sharing positive reviews (Liu et al., 2019), and customer forgiveness (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2012; Hur & Jang, 2019). In this context, in the highly competitive hospitality

industry it is crucial to implement customer-oriented recovery methods in case of service failures in order to transform the negative consequences into positive ones (Jeong & Lee, 2017; Jin et al., 2019).

In the service failure and recovery literature, appraisal theory is often used to understand customer responses to service failures and recovery incidents (Haj-Salem & Chebat, 2014; Sembada et al., 2016; Obeidat et al., 2017; Tengilimoğlu, 2024). According to appraisal theory (Lazarus, 2006), when faced with a transgression, individuals engage in a cognitive appraisal in which they evaluate the event, including the loss or threat to their resources and its consequences. As a result of these appraisals, they form their response intentions and behaviors (e.g., revenge, avoidance, and forgiveness) to cope with the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the psychological literature, coping responses to transgression situations are summarized under three dimensions of interpersonal motivation (TRIM): revenge, benevolence, and avoidance (McCollugh et al., 2013; Gerlsma et al., 2020; Barcaccia et al., 2021). All kinds of response behaviors that individuals engage in during transgression situations are derived from these motivations. For instance: High benevolence and low revenge and avoidance motivation are indicators of forgiveness (Gerlsma et al., 2020). Avoidance is considered a socially acceptable form of revenge (Strelan et al., 2020). Therefore, it can be said that revenge involves avoidance. Someone motivated by revenge is likely to exhibit at least some avoidance behavior toward the transgressors.

According to appraisal theory, service failures are negative experiences that lead to customer transgressions due to economic and social losses (Obeidat et al., 2017). In such cases, customers initiate the cognitive appraisal process, in which they develop a perception of inequality by comparing the costs they have paid with the outcomes they have received (Sembada et al., 2016). The perceived inequality expresses a negative cognitive appraisal that causes them to form their response behavior with avoidance and revenge motivations. On the other hand, the service provider's recovery efforts may reduce customers' perceptions of inequality in the cognitive appraisal process and lead customers to form their response behavior with high benevolence, low revenge and avoidance motivation, indicating forgiveness.

Especially in the hospitality industry, the customer's response to forgiveness and revenge following a service failure is more crucial due to the fact that the customer spends a certain period of time in the hotel and interacts intensively with the staff and other customers. Thus, the relationship between customers and service providers is critical to the well-being of both parties, and customer forgiveness provides service providers with an opportunity to repair relationships that have been harmed by service failures (Hur & Jung, 2019). Forgiveness is widely recognized as reducing stressful responses to transgressions and increasing the likelihood of constructive relationships in the future. Thus, it is considered as a "healing power" that can heal broken relationships between parties (Hur & Jung, 2019) and provide desirable outcomes such as loyalty and repurchase for the service provider (Walker, 2020; Muhammad & Rana, 2020). Otherwise, a valuable customer is likely to become an enemy seeking revenge against the provider (Grégoire & Fischer, 2006). Revenge refers to negative customer behavior after receiving unacceptable service with the intention of harming the provider (Joireman et al., 2013; Grégoire et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2022; Fu et al., 2022) and causing undesirable outcomes such as negative reviews and complaints to third parties that affect the success of businesses (Grégoire & Fisher, 2006; Sangpikul, 2021).

In this study, forgiveness and revenge intentions are considered outcome variables as they are antecedents of both the potential positive and negative consequences of service failure and recovery encounter. For instance, forgiveness increases customers repurchase and reconciliation intentions while decreasing their intentions to share negative reviews (Walker, 2020). On the other hand, revenge intentions increases customers' intentions to share negative reviews and complain to third parties, while decreasing their repurchase intentions (Grégoire & Fisher, 2006). Thus, the concepts of forgiveness and revenge are gaining importance in service failure and recovery context, and further research is needed to understand what conditions and variables influence these behavioral intentions (Yagil & Luria, 2015; Joireman et al., 2016; Hur & Jang, 2019). As service failures are negative events, the majority of studies focus on revenge intentions rather than forgiveness. Therefore, customer revenge is a well-studied topic, while customer forgiveness is relatively neglected (Hur & Jung, 2019), despite its desirable outcomes. Moreover, to the best of the authors' knowledge, only two studies (Zourrig et al., 2015; Zhan et al., 2023) examine revenge and forgiveness intentions simultaneously, and neither considers recovery satisfaction as an antecedent. While Zourrig et al. (2015) focus on negative and positive emotions in the context of service failures, Zhan et al. (2023) focus on workplace incivility and attribution perspectives in the context of employees. It is important to examine revenge and forgiveness simultaneously, as they are often seen as two sides of the same coin, influenced by similar factors but in reverse directions and to different degrees (e.g. Zourrig et al., 2015). Thus, to compare the effects of antecedents and to understand which is more effective in which cases, revenge and forgiveness should be analyzed simultaneously.

This study differs from the existing literature in several ways. First, this study simultaneously examines revenge and forgiveness, which have been relatively neglected in the service failure and recovery literature. This approach provides an opportunity to compare recovery satisfaction and failure severity separately in the context of revenge and forgiveness intentions, offering valuable insights for both academics and practitioners. Second, this study assesses the direct effects of failure severity on both recovery satisfaction as well as revenge and forgiveness intentions to determine its role in the recovery process and its varying effect on each of these variables. Related studies have revealed that satisfaction (Obeidat et al., 2017), revenge (Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013), and forgiveness (Hur & Jung, 2019; Tsarenko and Tojib, 2015) are directly affected by the severity of failure. However, it is difficult to compare the effect of failure severity on revenge, forgiveness, and recovery satisfaction since each study examines it separately. Third, this study uses the recall approach based on retrospective, actual

experience. Majority of service failure and recovery research primarily focuses on laboratory experiments that involve hypothetical scenarios, rather than real-life experiences (e.g., Hur & Jang, 2019; Alhouti et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2022). As a result, consumers may be exposed to manipulated circumstances that have little relation to their actual service failure experiences, and therefore may not accurately reflect their responses in a real service-recovery situation. Moreover, service failures are memorable events that can be easily recalled by customers (Grégoire & Fischer, 2006). Therefore, using a survey design based on actual experiences of service failure and recovery is likely to provide better insights (Harun et al., 2018).

There has been a significant amount of research in the subject of service failure and recovery, but many research questions are still unanswered and need further investigation (Harun et al., 2018; Grégoire and Mattila, 2020; Sahaf and Fazili, 2023). Specifically, this study seeks to answer the questions of how recovery satisfaction and failure severity affect customers' revenge and forgiveness intentions, and which one is more influential in which cases. To answer these questions, a conceptual model is developed in the context of appraisal theory. We use monetary (compensation) and non-monetary (apology) recovery methods, recovery satisfaction, and failure severity to explain forgiveness and revenge intentions.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

According to the bibliometric analysis conducted by Sahaf and Fazili (2023), justice theory emerged as the most common theoretical framework used to understand customer response to service failure and recovery incidents. In justice theory, service recovery refers to the process by which the organization redistributes justice to its customers who have experienced injustice due to a service failure (Liu et al., 2019). Tax et al. (1998) argue that customers assess service recovery based on recovery process, communication, and outcomes, which refers to procedural, interactional, and distributive justice dimensions. Although justice theory provides an appropriate framework for explaining behavioral intentions following service failure and recovery incidents, appraisal theory is more appropriate for explaining physiological responses such as forgiveness and revenge intentions as they involve cognitive and emotional processes. Early research on how costumer respond to dissatisfaction and service failure showed that responding behaviors occur spontaneously (Bougie et al., 2003; Obeidat et al., 2018). Recent approaches to the study of customer response behaviors consider cognitive appraisals by consumers, rather than their spontaneous actions (Lee et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022; Hamdy et al., 2023). Appraisal theory is often used to assess customer response in the context of service failures. Related studies (Hur & Jung, 2019; Weitzl, 2019; Lee et al., 2021; Fu et al., 2022) argue that service failures are considered in the scope of transgression and customers who encounter such situations initiate the cognitive appraisal process and form their responses as a result of the appraisals obtained from this process. Moreover, it is stated that customers develop coping responses based on revenge and forgiveness motivations in such transgressions (McCollough et al., 2013; Gerlsma et al., 2020; Barcaccia et al., 2021). In this context, customers' motivations for revenge and forgiveness that arise from the appraisal process are considered as antecedents to their subsequent behavioral intentions. From this perspective, this study developed a model focusing on forgiveness and revenge motives in the context of appraisal theory and coping response.

1.1. Compensation, Apology and Recovery Satisfaction

Related research often categorizes recovery methods as either psychological or tangible (Kuo & Wu, 2012; Ding & Lii, 2016), monetary or non-monetary (Lee, 2018), and high-cost or low-cost (Hsieh & Yeh, 2018). Psychological and non-monetary recoveries involve the service provider's efforts to compensate for the social loss experienced by the customer following a service failure through methods such as apology, explanation, and empathy. Monetary and tangible recoveries on the other hand, involve compensating the customer's economic loss through monetary means such as discounts, refunds, coupons, gifts, or free services (Fu et al., 2015; Lee, 2018; Manu & Sreejesh, 2020). Service failures result in both social and economic losses for customers (Obeidat et al., 2017; Luo & Mattila, 2020). Satisfaction can only be achieved if the service recovery is equal to the loss that the customer has experienced (McDougall & Levesque, 1998; Smith et al., 1999). Thus, in order to ensure satisfaction, it is necessary to compensate for both social and economic losses.

Recovery methods include non-monetary psychological elements such as apology in order to compensate for the social loss of the customers (Liao, 2007). Apology is one of the most common recovery methods offered following a service failure (Wang et al., 2009; Vaerenberg et al., 2019). The apology of the organization is an expression of regret for the service failure and recognition of the customer's problem (Liao, 2007). It also demonstrates that the organization accepts responsibility for the service failure and shows a willingness to resolve it (Mostafa et al., 2014; Shahril & Aziz, 2022). Therefore, when offering an apology, even if it is merely a courtesy, the organization takes responsibility for the service failure (Zemke & Bell, 1990). This in turn affects the customer's emotions and behavioral intentions (Wang et al., 2009). Apology helps alleviate the anger and frustration that customers may feel about the service failure. Thus, it plays an important role in the recovery process by regulating customer emotions following a service failure (Roschk & Gelbrich, 2014). Related studies indicate that offering an apology after a service failure positively affects recovery satisfaction (Tax et al., 1998; Smith et al., 1999; Abney et al., 2017). Based on these results, H_1 hypothesis, which states that the apology has a positive effect on recovery satisfaction, was developed.

H_1: Apology positively affects recovery satisfaction.

In some cases, non-monetary recovery methods such as apologies and courtesies are insufficient for an effective recovery and customers expect to be compensated for their economic loss resulting from the service failure (Boshoff & Leong 1998). In these cases, organizations often use recovery methods such as replacing the product or service, issuing refunds, or discounts as immediate and delayed monetary compensation (Roschk & Gelbrich, 2014; Vaerenberg et al., 2019). Compensation is a common service recovery strategy used to overcome economic losses (Sembada et al., 2016). Previous research has shown that the compensation offered as a recovery has a significant effect on both recovery satisfaction and repurchase intention (Yavas et al., 2004; Mostafa et al., 2014). In this vein, H_2 hypothesis, which states that compensation has a positive effect on recovery satisfaction, was developed.

H_2: Compensation positively affects recovery satisfaction.

1.2. Recovery Satisfaction, Customer Revenge and Customer Forgiveness

While service failures lead to dissatisfaction, they also offer a second chance to restore satisfaction through effective recovery methods (Kozub et al., 2014). In related studies (Andreassen, 2000; Holloway & Beatty, 2003; Cheng et al., 2019), two distinct types of customer satisfaction have been identified: pre-recovery and post-recovery. Pre-recovery satisfaction refers to the satisfaction experienced after a service failure. On the other hand, post-recovery satisfaction refers to the satisfaction experienced after the recovery process. In the context of expectancy theory, recovery satisfaction is the comparison between a customer's recovery expectations following a service failure and their perceptions of the recovery process (McCollough et al., 2000; Das et al., 2019). It is a type of satisfaction that occurs as a result of customers' subjective and emotional evaluations of the recovery process (Tsao, 2018).

Related studies suggest that service recoveries lead customers to reassess the service. When their recovery expectations are met, this leads to a sense of satisfaction. Conversely, when expectations are not met, a second dissatisfaction occurs (McCollough et al., 2000). In both scenarios, it is probable that customers may develop distinct behavioral intentions. Whereas instances of satisfactory recovery result in positive outcomes, instances of failed recovery result in a second deviation, which in turn produces more unfavorable outcomes (Hogreve et al., 2019; Koç, 2019). Therefore, the outcomes of service recovery differ according to the effectiveness of the recovery strategy. A successful service recovery may result in customers developing more positive emotions than customers who have never experienced a service failure (Vaerenbergh et al., 2019; Manu & Sreejesh, 2020). Conversely, a failed recovery may trigger negative emotions and even a desire for revenge (De Matos et al., 2007; Lastner et al., 2016). It is stated that a second deviation can give rise to feelings of frustration and betrayal in customers (Basso & Pizutti, 2016). Surachartkumtonkun et al. (2015) assert that customers may develop a desire for revenge against an organization when they experience a second disappointment after a service failure. Consequently, while recovery satisfaction indicates whether the recovery has been successful, it also predicts the behavioral intentions of customers. A successful recovery may lead to an increase in recovery satisfaction, which in turn may lead to the development of forgiveness intentions (Shin et al., 2018). Conversely, a failed recovery (Joireman et al., 2013; Grégoire et al., 2018; Fu et al., 2022) may lead to a decrease in recovery satisfaction and an increase in the intention to take revenge. In this vein, the H_3 and H_4 hypotheses were developed, which state that the recovery satisfaction has a positive effect on forgiveness and a negative effect on revenge intention.

H_3: Recovery satisfaction negatively affects revenge intention.

H_4: Recovery satisfaction positively affects forgiveness intention.

1.3. The Role of Failure Severity

The literature (Vaerenberg et al., 2019; Luo & Mattila, 2020) posits that there is no single recovery method that is effective against all service failures. The occurrence of service failures of varying types and degrees of severity gives rise to different expectations among customers regarding the recovery process (Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013). The success of the recovery effort is dependent upon the extent to which these expectations are met.

Service failure severity refers to the perceived intensity of the failure, indicating the extent of harm or potential loss (; Tsarenko & Tojib, 2012; Salagrama et al., 2021). It is the extent to which a service failure is perceived by the customer as significant or damaging. It encompasses both the magnitude of the failure and the degree to which it deviates from the customer's expectations. This concept reflects not only the measurable impact, such as financial or material loss, but also emotional and psychological harm, which can include feelings of betrayal, frustration, or dissatisfaction. The severity of a service failure is often determined by the customer's evaluation of the gap between the anticipated service performance and the actual experience. Higher severity failures indicate a greater gap between expected and actual service (Obeidat et al., 2017), which may result in stronger negative responses, such as negative emotions (Cho et al., 2017) and revenge intentions (Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013). In the context of service recovery, addressing service failure severity is critical, as more severe failures typically demand more significant efforts to restore customer satisfaction.

In related studies, failure severity has been identified as an important factor influencing post-recovery attitudes and behaviors (Weun et al., 2004; Cho et al., 2017). This is further supported by Sparks and Fredline (2007), who demonstrated that the severity of service failure has a negative impact on repurchase intention, regardless of the effectiveness of the recovery offered.

Similarly, Krishna et al. (2014) concluded that successful recovery for only moderate and low-severity service failures can lead to a recovery paradox. As the severity of the service failure increases, customers' perceptions of the loss also increase (Weun et al., 2004; Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011; Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013) and satisfaction can only be achieved when the service recovery is equal to the loss experienced by the customer (McDougall & Levesque, 1998; Smith et al., 1999). Thus, the success of the recovery is affected by the severity of the service failure (Lee, 2018; Luo & Mattila, 2020; Stokburger-Sauer & Hofmann, 2023). Previous studies have demonstrated that failure severity has a negative effect on both satisfaction (Obeidat et al., 2017) and recovery satisfaction (Chuang et al., 2012; Keiningham et al., 2014; Matikiti et al., 2019). As the failure severity increases, the recovery satisfaction decreases. Based on these results, H_5 hypothesis, which states that the failure severity has a negative effect on recovery satisfaction, was developed.

H_5: Failure severity negatively affects recovery satisfaction.

The appraisal theory posits that the appraisal of a negative event will result in the development of coping responses. In a service failure and recovery incident, cognitive appraisals are influenced by the severity of the service failure (Hur & Jung, 2019). High severity service failures refer to more negative events as they cause more economic and social loss to customers (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011; Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013). Thus, they lead customers to form their responses with more negative motivations (Joireman et al., 2016). In the context of social psychology, revenge is defined as a form of retaliatory behavior motivated by the desire for revenge. The more severe the loss perceived by the victim, the stronger the desire for revenge (Sembada et al., 2016). Consequently, the severity of service failures influences customers' revenge intentions to varying degrees as it affects the level of perceived loss (Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013).

The expectations of customers regarding the services are shaped by the normative standards. When the service falls below these standards due to service failures, this results in a higher level of dissatisfaction and more negative behavioral intentions (Obeidat et al., 2017). Furthermore, as the failure severity increased, the deviation of these standards also increased. In accordance with this notion, previous research has demonstrated that instances of severe service failure can give rise to intentions of revenge (Grégoire et al., 2018; Obeidat et al., 2018). In this vein, the H_6 hypothesis was developed, which state that the failure severity has a positive effect on revenge intention.

H_6: Failure severity positively affects revenge intention.

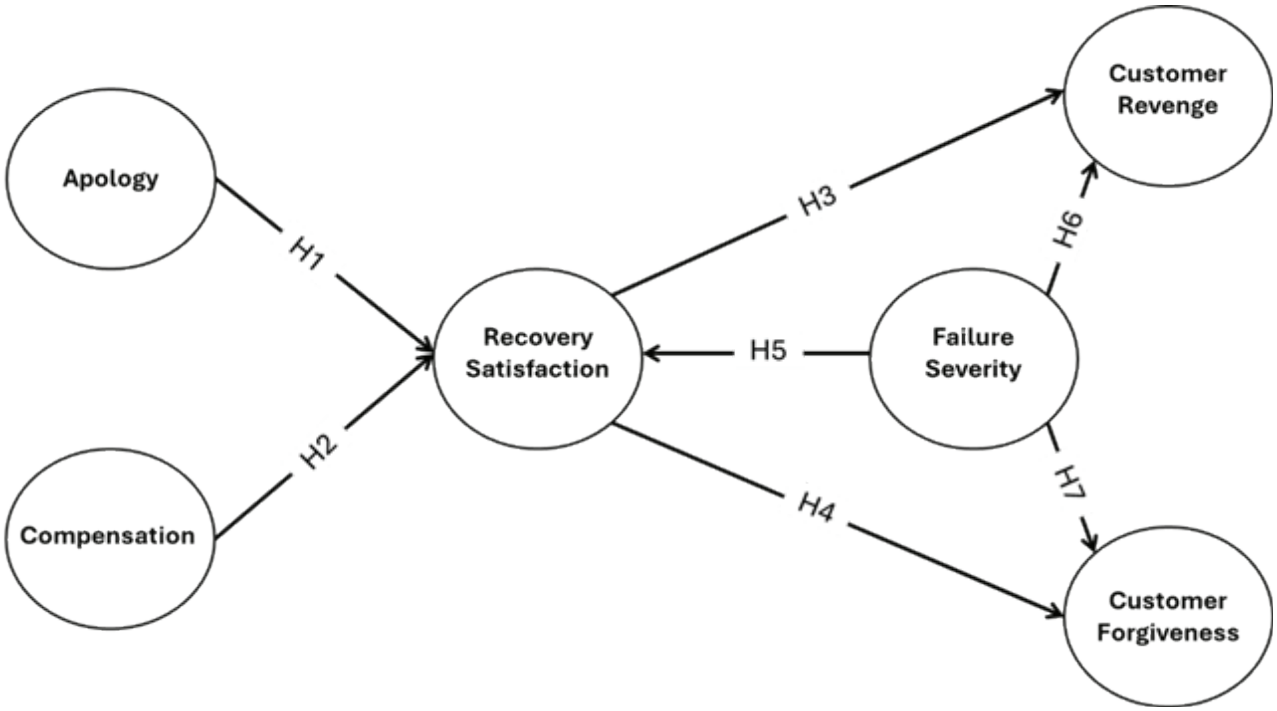
In contrast, low-severity failures result in less customer loss and may facilitate their forgiveness behavior. This hypothesis is supported by the findings of Yagil and Luria (2015), who demonstrated that low-severity service failures can be forgiven by customers' own motivation. Low-severity failures may also result in customers experiencing less negative emotions during the appraisal process, which in turn may lead to the development of forgiveness intentions. In the context of this theoretical framework, H_7 hypothesis was formulated, which posits that the severity of failure has a negative effect on forgiveness intention.

H_7: Failure severity negatively affects forgiveness intention.

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of monetary and non-monetary recovery methods and severity of failure on recovery satisfaction, revenge and forgiveness intentions. In order to address the research objectives, a structural equation model (SEM) was developed on the basis of appraisal theory (Figure 1). SEM can be defined as a multivariate statistical technique that combines factor analysis and multiple regression to assess complex relationships between observed and latent variables (Byrne, 2016). There are two broad approaches to employ SEM, covariance-based (CB-SEM) and partial least square (PLS-SEM). While CB-SEM focuses on theory testing and model fit with strict assumptions such as normal distribution and larger sample sizes, PLS-SEM emphasizes predictive and explanatory power with smaller samples and less strict assumptions such as no assumption of normal distribution (Dash & Paul, 2021). Furthermore, CB-SEM is advantageous for theory testing, assessing model fit, handling measurement error, analyzing complex constructs, and providing rigorous and reliable estimates compared to PLS-SEM and regression. Therefore, CB-SEM was employed in this study due to its emphasis on theory testing and the fulfillment of sample size and normal distribution requirements.

Figure 1: **Research Model**



2.1. Questionnaire and Measurements

A self-administered questionnaire was developed as the data collection instrument for this study. All measures were adapted from existing scales in relevant literature. The compensation (4 items) and apology scales (5 items) were developed by Walker (2020) combining items from previous studies (Liao, 2007). As for recovery satisfaction, the measurement used was developed by Roschk and Kaiser, (2013) and adapted by Liu et al. (2019) with four items based on hotel customers. Customer revenge intention scale was obtained from Weitzl et al. (2019) with four items. Customer forgiveness scale was obtained from Muhammad and Rana (2020) with five items. Failure severity scale was obtained from Matikiti et al. (2019) with four items. All the measurement items for the constructs were assessed using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Since the study was conducted in Turkey, the questionnaire required translation into Turkish. Back-translation was used to ensure the accuracy of the version. A thorough pre-test was conducted by involving 30 respondents prior to data collection. No major problems were found to exist in the method, and some minor issues were corrected through instruction changes.

2.2. Sample and Data Collection

The study population consists of participants who have experienced hotel service failures in the last 6 months. Given that a service failure and recovery encounter for hotel enterprises is not a common phenomenon, a random sample of the general population would be unlikely to produce an appropriate number of respondents with such experiences. Therefore, we followed the common practice of using purposive sampling (Tax et al., 1998). Purposive sampling is often considered the most appropriate method when there is a limited number of respondents with unique experiences to contribute to the study (Weitzel & Hutzinger, 2019). We adopted a recall approach to identify appropriate targets who experienced service failure during certain periods (e.g., Li et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2019). Following the recall approach procedures, a definition of service failure as "any type of error, mistake, deficiency or problem that occurs during the provision of a service, causing a delay or hindrance in the satisfaction of customer needs" (Koç, 2019) has been added to the first section of the questionnaires and then presented the respondents with the detailed written scripts listing some most common hotel service failure examples (Lewis & McCann, 2004), such as "room not ready," "slow service," "slow check-in/out," "incorrect bill," and "missing reservation". After that, respondents were asked a screening question to determine whether they had experienced a particular type of hotel service failure during their stay in the last six months. The response category was dichotomous, either "yes" or "no". Respondents who answered 'no' were excluded, whereas those with a response of "yes" were invited to complete the follow-up questionnaire. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire by considering the service failure they had experienced in the last six months and the recovery efforts offered by the hotel management in response to that failure. By asking respondents to recall a service failure they personally experienced, it rekindles the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes associated with the service failure (Weitzel & Hutzinger, 2019). This allows them to respond to various items based on their experience. Our approach is consistent with similar research on service failures (Harun et al., 2018; Weitzel & Hutzinger, 2019; Li et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2019).

The online questionnaires were randomly emailed to 2000 individuals between July 2023 and September 2023 from a pre-established email repository through the professional network. From the 590 respondents, 190 were excluded as they reported that they had not experienced a particular type of hotel service failure in the last six months. Of the remaining 400 questionnaires, 17 were excluded due to missing responses, and 383 usable questionnaires were included for further data analysis. It is recommended that the sample size of structural equation models should be at least 10 times the number of items in the measurement model (Hair et al., 2008; Byrne, 2016). The measurement model of this study consists of 26 items, which means that the minimum sample size requirement has been met with 383 respondents. The profiles of the respondents are analyzed in the SPSS and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: **Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Item	Answer	N (383)	%
Gender	Female	180	47
	Male	203	53
Generation	Generation Z	130	33,9
	Generation Y	123	32,1
	Generation X	103	26,9
	Baby Boomers	27	7,1
Marital Status	Single	162	42,2
	Married	221	57,8
Education	Primary School	32	8,4
	High School	88	22,9
	University	201	52,5
	Postgraduate	62	16,2
Profession	Unemployed	55	14,3
	Working for a Company	138	36,1
	Self-Employed	92	24,1
	Official	98	25,5
Frequency of stay at the hotel in the last year.	At Least Once	244	63,7
	2-3	77	20,1
	4-5	45	11,7
	More Than five	17	4,5

Notes: The Baby Boomer = 1946-1964. Generation X = 1965-1979. Generation Y = 1980-1994. Generation Z = born 1995-2012

As shown in Table 1, most respondents are male, predominantly from Generation Z, married, university graduates, working in a company and staying in a hotel once a year or less.

3. FINDINGS

Initially, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement model used in this study. Based on the recommendations of Hair et al (2008), the reliability and validity (convergent and discriminant validity) of the items were reported. Subsequently, the causal relationships in the model and the hypotheses developed were tested using SEM technique.

3.1. Reliability and Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement model. The reliability and validity (convergent and discriminant validity) of the items were assessed following the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2008). Hair et al. (2008) state that to assess convergent validity, three criteria must be fulfilled. That is, the standardized factor loadings should be significantly related to the latent construct and have a loading estimate of at least 0.60, the average variance extracted value (AVE) should be greater than 0.50, and the constructs should have a reliability value (CR and Cronbach Alpha) greater than 0.70. Referring to Table 2, all standardized loadings for the items were greater than 0.60. Additionally, the AVE for all constructs exceeded 0.50 and the reliability score for all constructs exceeded 0.70, indicating that convergent validity was achieved. Moreover, the skewness and kurtosis values ranging between +1.5 and -1.5 indicate a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 2: **The Analysis of Reliability and Validity for the Construct**

Construct	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	t-value	Factor Loading
Compensation AVE: 0,821 Composite Reliability: 0,948 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,948	COMP_1	3,044	1,1259	-0,065	-0,835	-	0,904
	COMP_2	3,050	1,0974	-0,039	-0,309	30,459	0,933
	COMP_3	3,060	1,1135	-0,062	-0,492	29,705	0,904
	COMP_4	3,128	1,0619	-0,086	-0,833	24,981	0,862
Apology AVE: 0,690 Composite Reliability: 0,917 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,922	APO_1	3,956	,7831	-0,577	0,500	-	0,876
	APO_2	3,935	,8015	-0,554	0,335	26,097	0,925
	APO_3	3,935	,8080	-0,656	0,512	22,748	0,859
	APO_4	3,862	,9346	-0,493	-0,353	17,407	0,736
	APO_5	3,849	,9227	-0,477	-0,311	17,533	0,739
Recovery Satisfaction AVE: 0,709 Composite Reliability: 0,906 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,916	RS_1	3,875	,9209	-0,676	0,088	-	0,717
	RS_2	3,775	,9162	-0,605	0,167	24,698	0,752
	RS_3	3,410	1,0593	-0,332	-0,455	18,249	0,947
	RS_4	3,527	1,0097	-0,342	-0,505	17,932	0,927
Failure Severity AVE: 0,773 Composite Reliability: 0,931 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,928	FS_1	3,339	1,0657	-0,149	-0,725	-	0,833
	FS_2	3,272	1,0729	-0,416	-0,496	23,021	0,907
	FS_3	3,363	1,1983	-0,461	-0,727	22,375	0,892
	FS_4	3,755	,9251	-0,588	0,082	21,992	0,883
Customer Forgiveness AVE: 0,701 Composite Reliability: 0,921 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,921	CF_1	3,091	,9839	-0,134	-0,243	-	0,865
	CF_2	3,039	,9767	0,124	-0,385	22,887	0,872
	CF_3	2,969	1,0073	0,109	-0,382	22,102	0,855
	CF_4	2,679	,9145	0,122	-0,483	19,282	0,791
	CF_5	2,794	,8931	0,106	-0,218	19,730	0,802
Customer Revenge AVE: 0,737 Composite Reliability: 0,918 Cronbach's Alpha: 0,930	CR_1	2,867	1,1602	-0,082	-0,833	-	0,909
	CR_2	2,851	1,1651	-0,325	-1,078	29,175	0,931
	CR_3	2,963	1,2188	-0,217	-1,029	20,607	0,790
	CR_4	2,927	1,2385	-0,176	-1,095	20,868	0,795

Notes: X^2 = 926,735; d.f. = 281; X^2/d.f. = 3,298; GFI = 0,905; CFI = 0,938; NFI = 0,914; TLI = 0,928; RMSEA = 0,078

According to results of CFA conducted three problematic error covariance were determined. With a modification index (MI) and a parameter change statistics (PC), it is clear that the error covariance between RS_1 and RS_2 (MI= 154,954; PC= 221), CR_3 and CR_4 (MI= 155,015; PC= 297), represent a model misspecification. Thus, an error covariance added respectively between these items. Then CFA conducted again, and the results shown on Table 2.

According to Hair and others (20008), a good fit model has a goodness of fit index (GFI) greater than 0.90, a root means square error of approximation (RMSEA) less than 0.08, a Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) greater than 0.90, and a comparative fit index (CFI) greater than 0.90. The confirmatory factor analysis result for the model (X2= 926,735; d.f.= 281; X2/d.f.= 3,298; GFI= 0,905; CFI= 0,938; NFI= 0,914; TLI= 0,928; RMSEA= 0,078) indicating a good fit.

Table 3: **Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)**

Construct	Fornell Larcker Criteria					
	COMP	**APO**	**RS**	**FS**	**CF**	**CR**
Compensation	**0,906**					
Apology	0,568***	**0,831**				
Recovery Satisfaction	0,673***	0,683***	**0,842**			
Failure Severity	-0,107*	-0,224***	-0,391***	**0,879**		
Customer Forgiveness	0,509***	0,537***	0,791***	-0,624***	**0,837**	
Customer Revenge	-0,393***	-0,415***	-0,572***	0,796***	-0,663***	**0,858**

Notes: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0,01; *p < 0,05

To assess discriminant validity, the procedure recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was used. Fornell and Larcker (1981) reported that to ensure discriminant validity, the squared correlation between each pair of latent variables must be less than the AVE of each latent variable. The AVE of the underlying constructs in Table 3 exceeded the squared correlation with other constructs.

3.2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

SEM was used to estimate the parameters of the structural model in Figure 1. The maximum likelihood method in Amos 23 was used to calculate the standardized solutions. All of the fitness measures presented reasonable fit to the data. These results (X2 = 950,187; d.f. = 286; X2/d.f. = 3,322; GFI = 0,903; CFI = 0,936; NFI = 0,911; TLI = 0,927; RMSEA = 0,078) indicate that the proposed model has a good fit (Hair et al., 2008).

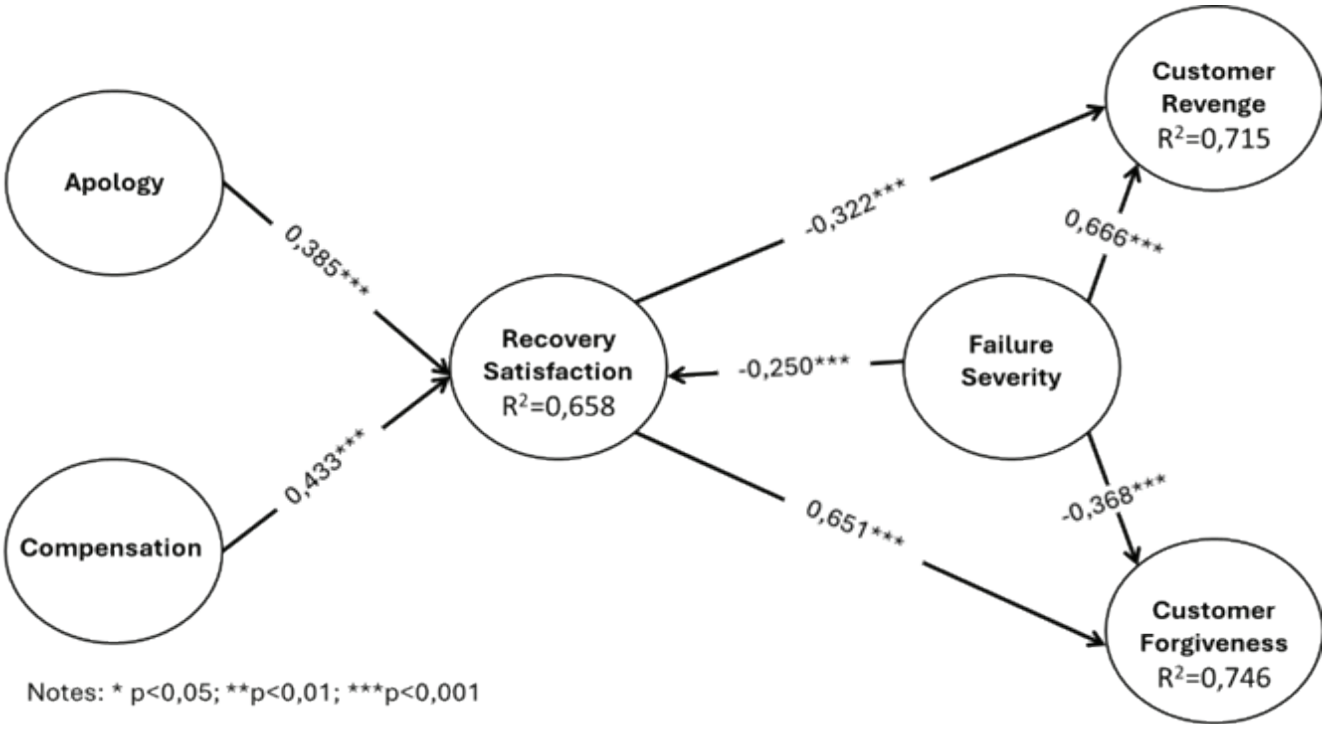
Table 4: **Structural Parameter Estimates and Goodness-of-Fit Indices**

Path	Std. Coef.	t-value	SE	P value	R^2	Results
H1: Compensations → Recovery Satisfaction	0,433***	8,879	0,032	0,000	0,658	Supported
H2: Apology → Recovery Satisfaction	0,385***	7,816	0,048	0,000		Supported
H3: Recovery Satisfaction → Customer Revenge	-0,322***	-7,999	0,064	0,000	0,715	Supported
H4: Recovery Satisfaction → Customer Forgiveness	0,651***	12,827	0,065	0,000	0,746	Supported
H5: Failure Severity → Recovery Satisfaction	-0,250***	-6,472	0,029	0,000	0,658	Supported
H6: Failure Severity → Customer Revenge	0,666***	14,859	0,053	0,000	0,715	Supported
H7: Failure Severity → Customer Forgiveness	-0,368***	-9,515	0,037	0,000	0,746	Supported

Notes: X^2 = 950,187; d.f. = 286; X^2/d.f. = 3,322; GFI = 0,903; CFI = 0,936; NFI = 0,911; TLI = 0,927; RMSEA = 0,078

As expected, apology (β=0,385***) and compensation (β=0,433***) were shown to have significantly positive effect on recovery satisfaction thereby supporting H_1 and H_2. On the other hand, recovery satisfaction shown to have a significantly negative effect on customer revenge intention (β=-0,322***) and positive effect on customer forgiveness (β=0,651***), thereby supporting H_3 and H_4. In addition, the results indicate a significantly negative influence of failure severity on recovery satisfaction (β=-0,250***), customer forgiveness (β=-0,368***) and positive influence on customer revenge intention (β=0,666***) thereby supporting H_5, H_6 and H_7.

Figure 2: **Path Analysis Results**



The model's ability to explain the proportion of variance in the dependent variable is assessed by the R^2 values. When evaluating R^2, a value of 0,67 or higher indicates a high level of explanation, while a value between 0,33 and 0,67 indicates a medium level

and a value between 0,29 and 0,33 indicates a weak level of explanation (Chin, 1998). According to relevant reference values, the model explains recovery satisfaction ($R^2 = 0,658$) at a medium level, customer revenge intention ($R^2 = 0,715$) and customer forgiveness ($R^2 = 0,746$) at a high level.

CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on the complex dynamics of service failure and recovery in the hospitality industry through the lens of appraisal theory. In the context of the cognitive appraisal process and the resulting intentions to forgive and take revenge, this research has provided valuable insights into how consumers respond to service failures and the implications for service providers. By analyzing the influence of apology, compensation, and failure severity on recovery satisfaction, forgiveness, and revenge intentions, it seeks to provide insights into effective recovery strategies and the management of service failures. Our findings demonstrate the critical importance of effective recovery strategies in managing service failures and restoring customer satisfaction. It has been identified that both psychological and tangible recovery methods are crucial tools for service providers. Furthermore, in order to facilitate recovery, it is necessary to adopt comprehensive approaches that address both social and economic losses experienced by customers.

The findings indicated that both apology and compensation play a significant role in influencing recovery satisfaction following service failures. Similarly, previous studies have demonstrated that offering an apology (Tax et al., 1998; Smith et al., 1999; Abney et al., 2017) and providing compensation positively affects recovery satisfaction (Yavas et al., 2004; Mostafa et al., 2014). Apology, as a psychological and non-monetary recovery method, aims to address the social loss experienced by the customer (Fu et al., 2015; Lee, 2018). It acknowledges the mistake and expresses regret, which can help restore satisfaction. On the other hand, compensation, typically a tangible and monetary recovery method, directly addresses the economic loss of the customer. By offering discounts, refunds, or other forms of reimbursement, compensation aims to restore satisfaction and rectify the negative impact of the service failure (Lee et al., 2011; Ding & Lii, 2016).

In the context of justice theory, the concept of apology is closely related to interactional justice (Bae et al., 2020), as it refers to the manner in which organizations interact with customers in the process of recovery, including expressions of politeness, courtesy and regret (Tang et al., 2018). On the other hand, the concept of compensation is directly linked to distributive justice (Tengilimoğlu & Öztürk, 2024), as it addresses the monetary outcomes of the recovery process (Ding & Li, 2016). The results of related studies on the effect of interactional and distributive justice on recovery satisfaction were found to be inconsistent. For example, some authors (Ding & Lii, 2016; Kuo & Wu, 2012; Radu et al., 2018) have stated that distributive justice is more effective, while others (Blodgett et al., 1997; Rojas et al., 2015) have claimed that interactional justice is more effective. In this study we found that compensation which refers distributive justice is more effective on recovery satisfaction. This is because compensating for the economic loss is often perceived as more tangible and directly beneficial to the customer, thus resulting in higher satisfaction levels.

The results revealed that recovery satisfaction plays a significant role in determining customer forgiveness and revenge intentions following a service failure. According to results, when customers perceive the recovery to be satisfactory, they exhibit a greater willingness towards forgiveness and a reduced motivation to seek revenge. In accordance with these findings, it is posited that customers tend to forgive organizations following a satisfactory resolution to the problem caused by a service failure (Walker, 2019). However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, no study has investigated the role of recovery satisfaction as an antecedent of forgiveness and revenge. In a study on reconciliation apart from forgiveness, Radu et al. (2018) found that recovery satisfaction has a positive effect on the process of reconciliation. Although they are two distinct constructs, it can be expected that recovery satisfaction may have an impact on forgiveness.

According to appraisal theory, organizations' successful recovery efforts that lead recovery satisfaction by compensating for losses as a result of service failure has been observed to elicit positive emotional responses from customers during the appraisal process (Özgen et al., 2012) thereby facilitating forgiveness (Zourrig et al., 2015). High levels of recovery satisfaction indicate that recovery efforts have been successful in addressing customer concerns and meeting their expectations (Tsao, 2018). Consequently, their perceptions of justice may be restored, thereby eliminating the motivation to seek revenge (Radu et al., 2018) and facilitating forgiveness (Zourrig et al., 2015). Conversely, dissatisfaction with recovery, which refers a failed recovery, can also lead to a second disappointment (Hogreve et al., 2019), which in turn triggers revenge intentions (Joireman et al., 2013; Grégoire et al., 2018). Moreover, Lin & Chou (2022) posited that inadequate recovery cannot rectify the customer's loss and may ultimately dissuade them from forgiving the organization. Therefore, while recovery satisfaction positively influences forgiveness, it mitigates revenge intentions.

This study examines the role of failure severity as a predictor of recovery satisfaction, forgiveness, and revenge intentions, with a view to comparing its effect on these different behavioral intentions. The findings indicated that an increase in failure severity resulted in a decline in recovery satisfaction, regardless of the effectiveness of the recovery. Similarly, previous studies have demonstrated that failure severity has a negative effect on recovery satisfaction (Chuang et al., 2012; Keiningham et al., 2014; Matikiti et al., 2019; Sidhu et al., 2023). In the context of service failure, consumer appraisals are based on their perception of the severity of the failure (Hur & Jung, 2019), which is determined by the magnitude and significance of their economic and

social losses (Obeidat et al., 2017). Thus, consumers' satisfaction and negative responses are affected by service failure severity (Sembada et al., 2016). In predicting recovery satisfaction, it was observed that failure severity has the least significant effect among apology and compensation. This is due to the fact that customers tend to prioritize the manner in which the issue is resolved (recovery methods) over the perceived severity of the failure when evaluating satisfaction with the recovery process.

The consumer response to a service failure is contingent upon the perceived severity of the failure, as it leads to more negative appraisals in the appraisal process due to its influence on the magnitude of the perceived loss (Sembada et al., 2016). Thus, not only satisfaction but also behavioral responses are affected by failure severity (Obeidat et al., 2017). The findings of the study corroborate the aforementioned notion, indicating that the perceived severity of a failure has a positive effect on revenge intentions and a negative effect on forgiveness. Similarly, previous studies have demonstrated that failure severity has an effect on revenge intentions (Grégoire et al., 2018; Joireman et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2022; Sembada et al., 2016) and forgiveness (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2012; Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015). In related studies, it is proposed that an increase in the perceived severity of a failure results in an increase in the intention to seek revenge (Sembada et al., 2016) and a decrease in the likelihood of the consumer forgiving the organization (Hur & Jung, 2019). Furthermore, this study examined the comparative effects of failure severity and recovery satisfaction on revenge and forgiveness. The findings revealed that failure severity has a greater impact on revenge intentions, while recovery satisfaction has a greater impact on forgiveness.

Theoretical Implications

This study provides significant contributions to the existing literature. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first study to examine the effect of recovery satisfaction on forgiveness and revenge intentions. In this respect, it can be expected to provide important insights into the relationship between recovery satisfaction and forgiveness and revenge intentions from the perspective of appraisal theory. In addition, examining forgiveness and revenge intentions simultaneously and investigating the effects of service failure severity and recovery satisfaction comparatively on these behavioral intentions also contributes to the literature. In this context, our findings offer significant insights regarding the nature of forgiveness and revenge intentions in the context of service failure, as well as the varying effects of recovery satisfaction and failure severity. Moreover, this study employs both monetary and non-monetary recovery strategies, which allows for an investigation of their comparative influence on recovery satisfaction. In this way, the study makes a contribution to the ongoing debate about the effectiveness of recovery methods on recovery satisfaction.

Practical Implications

For practitioners in the hospitality industry, our study offers actionable insights into the importance of understanding customer responses and tailoring recovery efforts accordingly. Given the unavoidability of service failures, scholars have emphasized the significance of comprehending customers' responses to service recovery efforts. The present study demonstrates that both monetary (compensation) and non-monetary (apology) recovery methods influence recovery satisfaction. These findings assist hotel management in formulating effective strategies by focusing on the role of compensation and apology. Although the results indicate that compensation is a more effective means of achieving recovery satisfaction, it is important not to neglect the impact of apology. In addition, severity of failure has a negative effect on recovery satisfaction. In this regard, hotel management should take precautions to avoid high severity failures, even if they cannot completely prevent them. It is also important to determine the severity of the service failure prior to implementing a recovery method, and to identify a recovery consisting of apology and compensation in a balance commensurate with the severity of the service failure in order to achieve recovery satisfaction.

Furthermore, it is evident that a lack of satisfaction with the recovery process is associated with an increase in revenge intentions and a decrease in forgiveness. Dissatisfaction with the recovery refers to a failed recovery following a service failure, which is inadequate to meet customer expectations regarding recovery. Both the results of our study and previous studies reveal that failed recovery has a significant effect on revenge intentions and forgiveness. In this context, it is of paramount importance that businesses implement a system to identify failed recoveries. For instance, post-recovery customer contact follow-up could be integrated into this system to identify failed recoveries. When failed recovery attempts are determined, hotel management should provide improved recovery to eliminate the effects of failed recovery.

The findings of this study indicate that recovery satisfaction is more effective in terms of forgiveness intentions, whereas failure severity is more effective in terms of revenge intentions. Thus, to reduce the revenge intentions, minimizing the severity of service failures is crucial, even if they cannot be prevented entirely. On the other hand, to encourage forgiveness intentions, it is essential to ensure recovery satisfaction. In this context, it is crucial to determine the severity of the service failure and to develop appropriate recovery methods that are commensurate with the severity of the failure. This approach could help ensure satisfaction with the recovery process and enhance the intention to forgive, while simultaneously reducing the intention to revenge.

Limitations and Future Research

With only one country, this study has some limitations, especially related to the cultural background of the participants. It is known that customers from different cultural backgrounds perceive the service failure and recovery efforts differently (Tasci et. al., 2021; Kuar et al., 2022). Moreover, it is stated that revenge intentions and forgiveness may vary according to countries and cultures (Obeidat et al., 2018). Therefore, future research should focus on the cultural background of the participants and identify the differences that provide valuable insights to the literature and tourism practitioners.

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APPENDIX
MEASUREMENT SCALES

Items	Scale	Source
1. The service provider offered a fair redress (such as a refund or other compensation) for the problem.	Compensation	(Walker, 2020)
2. The service provider provided extra compensation (such as a coupon, cash award, or gift certificate).		
3. The service provider made a very generous offer to compensate me for the break-down in service.		
4. I received no compensation for the service problem. (R)		
5. The service provider made an apology to me for what had happened.	Apology	(Walker, 2020)
6. The service provider apologized for the inconvenience the problem had brought to me.		
7. The service provider expressed regret for the mistake the company had made.		
8. The service provider said she or he was sorry for the service failure.		
9. I received an "I'm sorry" from the service provider regarding the service failure.		
10. I am happy with my complaining was handled.	Recovery Satisfaction	(Roschk & Kaiser, 2013; Liu et al, 2019)
11. In my opinion, the hotel manager provided a satisfactory solution to my complaint.		
12. I am satisfied with the handling of my complaining.		
13. I am satisfied with how the hotel manager handled the problem in this particular occasion.		
14. The service provider earlier harmed me – now I want to harm the brand.	Customer Revenge	(Weitzl et al., 2019)
15. I wanted to take vengeance upon the service provider.		
16. I wanted to punish the service provider in some way.		
17. I thought about ways to sabotage the service provider.		
18. I will not hold on hurt and anger for service provider.	Customer Forgiveness	(Muhammad and Rana, 2020)
19. I am not going to get even.		
20. I am letting go the negative emotions.		
21. I made an effort to be more friendly and concerned.		
22. I will find it difficult to act warmly towards them. (R)		
23. I consider the service failure experience to be very severe.	Failure Severity	(Matikiti et al., 2019)
24. The service failure experience was very bad.		
25. The service failure experience was very unpleasant to me.		
26. The service failure experience was enormous.		

Notes: All the measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree