

# **ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF SERVICE RECOVERY ON SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF RESTAURANTS: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LEGITIMACY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study applied justice dimension theory. The paper seeks to determine the effect of service recovery strategies on customer satisfaction and social sustainability. The explanatory design and quantitative study involved the survey of 37 managers, 54 waiters/waitresses, and 169 customers of 10 restaurants in the Kumasi metropolis. A multi-stage (simple random) sampling technique was used in selecting the restaurants (individual restaurants) for the study. Also, purposive (convenience) sampling procedures were used in selecting the waiters, waitresses, and managers (customers). Data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The study adopted multiple regression and the Structural Equation Model in analysing the data. The study showed that both customers and service providers perceive the Kumasi metropolis' restaurants to practice various service recovery justices. The distributive, interactional, and informational justice positively and statistically significantly influenced customers' satisfaction level and social sustainability. The legitimacy of the restaurants in their located communities was not a moderator in the effect of the level of satisfaction of customers on social sustainability. The study concluded that service recovery strategies are emerging as a vital component of restaurants in Ghana and that recovering failed services could help in achieving sustainability. This study, therefore, recommends training, workshops, and seminars on service recovery.

**Keywords:**Service recovery, informational justices, social sustainability, customer satisfaction organizational legitimacy

## **INTRODUCTION**

The hospitality industry plays a crucial role in contributing vehemently to the growth of the success of the nation's economy. As a result, providing exceptional service and managing

service failures is of much concern to the industry. Anyone who has experienced a service failure will know the importance of service recovery and also for the firm, in making sure customers do not defect and that socially restaurants will be sustained. Service recovery is described as the actions that the organisation uses to defeat the incidence of service failure, (Haze et al. 2017). In the best form of description, service recovery is considered as the action is taken when something is done wrongly in the process of delivering service, (Fabian & Jeff, 2008). It is the responsibility of the service provider to act instantaneously to make sure that the desired outcome is attained and necessary corrections are effected afterward so that the failure does not recur. The concept of service recovery and sustainability are deemed as the reasonable treatments resulting after a service failure, and the benefits gained by the service provider as well as the client (Rupp et al., 2006). Organised service recovery programs are regarded to be associated with social sustainability, (Gariga and Mele, 2004).

In Ghana, there have been growing concerns regarding the safety of food served by small, medium, and large restaurants and so this has given rise to the dissatisfaction of Ghanaian customers with the food services of restaurants, (Odonkor&Odonkor, 2020). Such situations create customer defection and therefore necessitate the adoption of special recovery strategies to win back dissatisfied clients. In line with this, service failure produces varied recovery strategies reliant on the social contextual world and this expatiates on the way and manner that service providers need to comprehend the course of the failure to adopt a particular strategy that can satisfy the needs of the customers (Azenri et al. 2018). Organized service recovery programs are regarded to be associated with social sustainability (Gariga&Mele 2004). Ideally, restaurants worldwide are required to have systematic mechanisms for recovering failed services. However, many restaurants in Ghana do not practically perceive service recovery as a strategic management tool for sustainable purposes. The few restaurants that attach significance to service recovery rarely roll it out systematically in an attempt to ensure sustainable performances. Service recovery practices in most restaurants in Ghana are largely ad hoc. It is therefore not surprising that the Ghana Tourism Authority's Report (2018) has indicated that many restaurants in Ghana rarely survive beyond three years after their establishment. Notwithstanding the enormous impact of service failure on the sustainability of the many businesses within the tourism industry of Ghana, limited attention is accorded to the concept by both researchers and practitioners in the industry in Africa, particularly in Ghana. The interest of researchers has largely been limited to service recovery strategies and sustainability in the service industry in the developed geographical setting, particularly in North America (La, 2019), Western Europe, and Asia (Luu, 2018; Villi and Koc, 2018). From the extant service recovery literature, there are no documented studies integrating sustainable programs and service recovery in the survival of restaurants within the Kumasi metropolis. The limited studies that generally relate service factors to sustainability have also largely focused on the accounting profit that accrues to the industry with limited emphasis on social benefits and social cost (La, 2019).

In addition to these research gaps, studies have also rarely touched on the potential mediating role of customer satisfaction in the achievement of sustainability and the moderating role of the legitimacy gained by businesses within communities over some time (Faisal, Greg &Rusmin, 2012). This study, therefore, seeks to bridge these research gaps by investigating the roles of customer satisfaction and legitimacy in the impact of service recovery strategies on the social sustainability of restaurants in the Ghanaian restaurant industry. The main specific objectives of the study included: (1) The effect of service recovery strategies on social sustainability; (2) The effect of service recovery strategies on customer satisfaction; (3) The extent to which customer

satisfaction affects social sustainability; (4) The mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between service recovery strategies and social sustainability; and (5) The moderating role of organisational legitimacy in the relationship between customer satisfaction and social sustainability.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Service recovery**

Service recovery is described as the actions that the organisation uses to defeat the incidence of service failure, (Haze et al. 2017). In the best form of description, service recovery is considered as the action is taken when something is done wrongly in the process of delivering service, (Fabian & Jeff, 2008). It is the responsibility of the service provider to act instantaneously to make sure that the desired outcome is attained and necessary corrections are effected afterward so that the failure does not recur. In Ghana, there have been growing concerns regarding the safety of food served by small, medium, and large restaurants and so this has given rise to the dissatisfaction of Ghanaian customers with the food services of restaurants, (Odonkor&Odonkor, 2020). Such situations create customer defection and therefore necessitate the adoption of special recovery strategies to win back dissatisfied clients. In line with this, service failure produces varied recovery strategies reliant on the social contextual world and this expatiates on the way and manner that service providers need to comprehend the course of the failure to adopt a particular strategy that can satisfy the needs of the customers, (Azenri et al. 2018). Notably, the impact that online service recovery reactions.

### **Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction has to do with how the services of a firm generate an outcome that the customer takes delight in. A study by Henning et al., (2002) suggested that, customer satisfaction has a relationship with the development of commitment and that, the better the recovery performance after a service failure, the higher the post-recovery satisfaction. Again, customer satisfaction has always been generating positive intentions of customers by making them spread positive word-of-mouth about an outlet and also increasing patronage intentions of the client (Hsin-Hui et al. 2011).

### **Organisational legitimacy**

The concept of legitimacy encompasses normative, legal, sociological and cultural meanings. Legitimacy has long been recognised as a core element in political and governance regimes, dealing with the relationship between societal acceptance of regimes and institutions and their ability to exercise power and authority effectively (Faisal, Greg & Rusmin, 2012). The focus of this study is not on legitimacy in the realm of regime types and politics, but rather on organisational legitimacy. It largely emphasises the streams of disciplines that evaluate the forces that impact upon stakeholders of the organisation the theory of resource dependency (Pfeffer&Salancik, 1978), and the approaches of neo-institutional (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). In the field of international development, legitimacy surfaces in two discourses.

### **Social sustainability**

Secondly, the social dimension on the other hand deals with the impact an organisation wields or exercises on the society in which it runs, (Sloan et al., 2009). The principal factor of the social dimension which is reliant on social responsibility theory states that businesses apart from maximizing shareholders worth, owe it a duty to act in a way that is advantageous to

society and this is the way hospitality works to contribute positively to the lives of the local people in the current and the future, (Palazzi&Starcher, 2000).A hospitality outlet committed to sustainability therefore must deal with issues such as public health, social justice, human rights, labour rights, community issues, equal opportunities, skills and education, workplace safety, and working conditions. It must also maintain and promote social and cultural diversity, involving communities, consult stakeholders and the public as well as train staff about sustainable practices. Assessment of the social impact of activities to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities should be considered. Issues such as fair trade and fair prices about sourcing products and food items require consideration. Food and beverages from the locality have to be considered.

**Theory and hypotheses development**

**Justice theory**

The justice theory which underpins this study contends that more often customers would like to strike a balance between the inputs invested and outputs received after a failure and that the customers expect the compensation to be equitably and appropriately given. This means that, in giving outcomes after service failures, the service providers should learn to give it equitably so as not to cause more dissatisfaction to the customers. When the customer weighs the input against the output and finds that there is a balance then he feels justice has been served or he has been treated fairly. Again when customers perceive fairness in their business transactions it is associated with satisfaction. On the other hand when the customers feel justice has not been served dissatisfaction sets in. Moreover, customer satisfaction is associated with the positive intention of customers by making them spread the positive word-of-mouth about an outlet, and also increases patronage- intentions of the client, (Hsin-Hui et al. 2011).

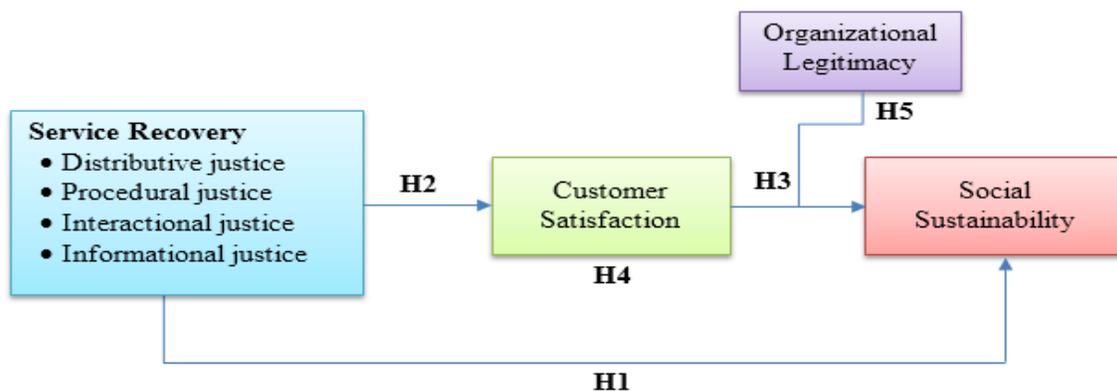


Figure 1. Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework in (Figure 1) tries to put in place strategies that could help recover failed services. The study looked at the extent to which service recovery relates to customer satisfaction and also whether there is an interaction between organizational legitimacy and customer satisfaction as well as sustainability. Earlier studies show that customer satisfaction is vital to both the social sustainability performances of firms (e.g., Kandampully&Suhartanto, 2003; Díaz, Gómez, Martín-Consuegra& Molina, 2017; Sciarelli et al., 2017). The study by Kandampully and Suhartanto (2003) found that satisfying customers alone are not enough, but a crucial factor to re-patronage. In a survey of 430 internet customers in Egypt, Sciarelli et al.

(2017) reported that service recovery satisfaction positively influences customer loyalty, which eventually stimulates a higher level of sustainability. In their developed framework, Díaz, Gómez, Martín-Consuegra, and Molina (2017) emphasized that service recovery satisfaction of firms in the foodservice industry positively influences the social sustainability of the firms.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted an explanatory survey design to explain the link between service recovery practices and social sustainability in the various restaurants. A quantitative approach was adopted and this enabled us to describe certain aspects of the population by sampling individuals to complete a set of questionnaires. The target population for the study was made up of managers, waiters/waitresses, and customers of all restaurants within Kumasi Metropolis. From the total target population of 800, 610 are customers, 46 are managers and 144 are waiters and waitresses. The sample size of the study of 260 was determined by the De Vaus (2002) sample size formula. A multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting the sample units. The researcher adopted the stratified sampling technique to select the restaurants for the study. This is because the restaurants have already been categorized into grades (strata) by the Ghana Tourist Board (2018). Sample frames were constructed and, with simple random sampling, the various restaurants for the study were selected: 2 restaurants from grade one, 3 from grade two, and 5 from grade three restaurants. According to the Ghana Tourism Authority, there are seventy-two registered restaurants within the Ashanti Region. Out of these, 34 restaurants are found within the Kumasi Metropolis. The Ghana Tourist Board rates these restaurants yearly based on their capacity, service delivery, number of facilities, excellent- ambiance and décor, excellent quality furnishing, fixtures, fittings, extensive cuisine, flawless/ impeccable professional and high level of service, superior quality tableware, and linen and a wide choice of drinks and wine. Subsequently, the purposive sampling procedure was used in selecting the waiters, waitresses, and managers as this group are more informed concerning the service recovery practices. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the various customers for the study.

This study primarily relied on a structured questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaire largely constituted closed-ended questions. The categorical questions were largely ordinal, binary, and multi-choice. Two separate questionnaires were developed for the customers of restaurants and service providers (managers and waiters/waitresses). A likert scale ranging from “1=Extremely Disagree” to “7=Extremely Agree” was employed. The raw data was edited for inconsistencies. The cleaned data was coded and fed initially to the Microsoft Excel Version 10. The Microsoft data format was imported to the Statistical Software Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS). The Lisrel Version 8.50 was employed to validate the measurement items of the study through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The reliability of validated measurement items was checked through Cronbach Alpha analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. The descriptive statistical tools used for the analysis were frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Inferentially, the developed hypotheses of the study were tested using Spearman’s correlation, multivariate regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM). Both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was used for the study.

**RESULTS**

**Demographic information of service providers**

The characteristic of the managers, waiters/waitresses of the restaurants is discussed in this part of the study. The characteristics include gender, age, and respondent’s position and years in the respondent’s current position. The result of the distribution of the demographic characteristics of the respondent is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic summary of sampled service providers**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	39	42.4
Female	52	57.6
Age (Years)		
< 20	12	13.3
20-29	44	48.0
30-39	22	24.5
40-49	12	13.3
50+	1	1.0
Position		
Manager	39	42.9
Waiter/Waitress	52	57.1
Years in Position		
1 Year	37	40.8
2-4 Years	32	35.2
5-10 Years	22	24.0

**Source: Field Survey (2020)**

**Demographic information of customers**

The characteristics of the customers of the restaurants are discussed in this part of the study. The discussed characteristics of the customers included gender, age, and highest educational level of the respondent, marital status of the respondent, occupation of the respondents, and monthly income of the respondents. The result of the distribution of the demographic characteristics of the customers is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Demographic summary of sampled customers**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	106	62.6
Female	63	37.4
Age		
< 20	5	2.7
20-30	70	41.2
31-40	54	31.9
41-50	16	9.3
> 50	25	14.8

Education (Highest)

	No formal schooling	3	1.6
	Primary school completed	1	.5
	SSS/Middle school completed	36	21.4
	College/University/Polytechnic completed	110	64.8
	Post-graduate degree	19	11.5
Marital status			
	Never married	44	25.8
	Married	62	36.8
	Living with partner	30	17.6
	Widowed	15	8.8
	Divorced	12	7.1
	Separated	6	3.8
Occupation			
	Government employee	40	23.6
	Non-paid student	9	5.5
	Private employee	25	14.8
	Self-employed	67	39.6
	Unemployed (able to work)	20	12.1
	Unemployed (Unable to work)	5	2.7
	Retired	3	1.6
Monthly Income			
	< ₱1,000	31	18.1
	₱1,001-₱2,000	45	26.9
	> ₱2,000	93	54.8

**Source: Field Survey (2020)**

**Service recovery, customer satisfaction, legitimacy and social sustainability**

In this section of the study, the dependent variable considered was social sustainability as a component construct of sustainability. The independent variables were the four main service recovery strategic justices including distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational. The tested mediator and moderator were customer satisfaction and organisational legitimacy respectively. The ordinary least square multiple regression method results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.OLS estimation result of service recovery and social sustainability**

Constructs	Unstandardized $\beta$ Social Sustainability						VIF
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	
(Constant)	-1.454(-2.043)	.887(3.926)***	-.764(-1.233)	-.879(-1.343)	-.698(-1.129)	-.697(-1.113)	
<b>Hypothesized</b>							
<i>Distributive</i>	.145(1.116)		.002(.020)	.054(.452)	-.002(-.018)	-.002(-.016)	1.780
<i>Procedural</i>	-.180(-.688)		.002(.009)	-.182(-.768)	-.033(-.144)	-.033(-.143)	5.482
<i>Interactional</i>	.614(2.608)**		.262(1.259)	.486(2.255)**	.283(1.368)	.284(1.355)	6.050
<i>Informational</i>	.829(12.927)***		.533(7.998)***	.592(8.482)***	.508(7.464)***	.508(7.322)***	2.400
<i>Cus. Satisfaction</i>		.800(18.602)***	.432(7.902)***		.352(4.814)***	.352(4.449)***	4.944
<i>Org. Legitimacy</i>				.314(6.147)***	.106(1.638)	.106(1.519)	4.415
<b>Interactions</b>							
<i>CS*OJ</i>						.000(-.007)	3.151
R <sup>2</sup>	.689	.658	.770	.774	.774	.774	
$\Delta R^2$			.112	.055	.030	.000	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.682	.656	.764	.737	.766	.765	
SE Estimate	.85978	.89404	.74077	.78232	.73725	.73936	
F-Statistic	97.948(4)***	346.046(1)***	118.050(5)***	102.204(5)***	99.764(6)***	85.023(7)***	
$\Delta F$ -Statistic			21.548***	37.791***	23.175***	.000	
Durbin Watson	1.501	1.652	1.643	1.667	1.692	1.692	

Note: t-values are in the parenthesis; \*p < .1, \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01

Source: Field Survey (2020)

### **Service recovery and social sustainability of restaurants**

Model 1 in Table 3 shows that the restaurants' interactional justice service recovery strategies are directly and significantly associated with the social sustainability of the restaurants ( $\beta=.614$ ,  $P<.01$ ). Thus, a statistically significant unit increase in the restaurants' interactional justice service recovery practices is associated with a 0.614 unit increase in the social sustainability of the restaurants. The restaurants' informational justice service recovery strategies are directly and significantly associated with the social sustainability of the restaurants ( $\beta=.829$ ,  $P<.01$ ). Thus, a statistically significant unit increase in the restaurants' informational justice service recovery practices is associated with a 0.829 unit increase in the restaurants' social sustainability. The restaurants' distributive and procedural justice service recovery practices were positively related to the restaurants' social sustainability. However, distributive and procedural justices were not statistically significantly related to the social sustainability of the restaurants.

### **Customer satisfaction and social sustainability of restaurants**

Model 2 in Table 3 shows that the satisfaction of the customers of the restaurants is directly and significantly associated with the social sustainability of the restaurants ( $\beta=.800$ ,  $P<.01$ ). Thus, a statistically significant unit increase in the satisfaction of the customers of the restaurants is associated with a 0.800 unit increase in the social sustainability of the restaurants, controlling for the recovery strategies of the restaurants. Also, model 3 of Table 3 shows that the satisfaction of the customers of the restaurants is directly and significantly associated with the social sustainability of the restaurants ( $\beta=.432$ ,  $P<.01$ ). Thus, a statistically significant unit increase in the satisfaction of the restaurants' customers is associated with a 0.432 unit increase in the restaurant's social sustainability.

### **Organisational legitimacy and social sustainability of restaurants**

Model 4 in Table 3 shows that the restaurants' legitimacy in their communities of location positively influences the social sustainability of the restaurants ( $\beta=.314$ ,  $P<.01$ ). Thus, a statistically significant unit increase in the restaurants' legitimacy in their communities of location is associated with a 0.314 units increase in the social sustainability of the restaurants. However, considering the satisfaction of customers in terms of the practiced recovery strategies, the restaurants' legitimacy in their communities of location failed to significantly influence the social sustainability of the restaurants (*see* Model 5 and Model 6).

### **Customer satisfaction as the mediator in the service recovery – social sustainability linkage**

Table 4 shows that customer satisfaction failed to mediate the relationship between distributive, procedural, and restaurants' social sustainability. However, customer satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between interactional justice and the social sustainability of the restaurants. The customers' satisfaction also partially mediated the relationship between the informational justice of the restaurants and the restaurants' social sustainability. Customer satisfactions' total mediation effect in the relationship between interactional justice and social sustainability was relatively higher than the total mediation effect of customer satisfaction in the relationship between restaurants' informational justice and social sustainability of the restaurants.

**Table 4. Mediation analysis**

Path	Unstandardized $\beta$ s			Sobel test statistic	Form of mediation
	Direct Effect (D)	Indirect Effect (I)	Total Effect (D+I)		
Dj → Cs → SS	.002	.331*.432 = .143	.145		No Mediation
Pj → Cs → SS	.002	-.420*.432 = -.181	-.601		No Mediation
Ij → Cs → SS	.262	.817*.432 = .353	.615	2.78***	Full
In → Cs → SS	.533	.683*.432 = .295	.828	6.74***	Partial

Note: \*p < .1, \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01, Distributive Justice = Dj, Procedural Justice = Pj, Interactional Justice = Ij, Informational Justice = In, Customer Satisfaction = Cs, Social Sustainability - SS

Source: Field Survey (2020)

**Moderation role of legitimacy in the customer satisfaction – social sustainability linkage**

Model 6 in Table 4 shows that the interaction between customer satisfaction and organisation legitimacy (CS\*OJ) was not statistically significantly related to the social sustainability of the restaurants. This implies that the positive effect of customer satisfaction on the social sustainability of the restaurants was not significantly moderated by the legitimacy of the restaurants.

**Service recovery, customer satisfaction, legitimacy and environmental sustainability**

In this section of the study, the dependent variable considered was environmental sustainability as a component construct of sustainability. The independent variables were the four main service recovery strategic justices including distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational. The tested mediator and moderator were customer satisfaction and organisational legitimacy respectively. The ordinary least square multiple regression method results are shown in Table 3.

**Legitimacy as Moderator in the Customer Satisfaction – sustainability Linkage**

Besides the mediation role of customer satisfaction in the interactional and informational service recovery procedures of the restaurants in their attempt to achieve a higher level of environmental and social sustainability, firms were hypothesised to exert a certain level of legitimacy in the community. However, the effect of the customers’ satisfaction on the sustainability of the restaurants was not significantly dependent on legitimacy but rather primarily on the level of satisfaction associated with the service recovery practices. The restaurant industry customers in Ghana are not largely influenced by their perception of the commonality of restaurants but rather the quality of the offered services efforts extended in correcting failures. This implies that the positive moderation role of organisational legitimacy in the effect of customer satisfaction on the restaurants’ sustainability was not supported by the findings of this study.

**5.3 Customer Satisfaction and Sustainability**

A satisfied customer has a higher propensity to purchase and repurchase services and spread the right word of mouth that could promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Thus, in this study, customer satisfaction was directly linked with the sustainability of the restaurants. The findings of this study support the hypothesized (H4) positive association between customer satisfaction and the sustainability practices of the restaurants. Furthermore, the hypothesized positive and significant relationship between customers’ service recovery satisfaction of the restaurants and social (H4a) and environmental (H4b) sustainability was supported. In corroboration with this finding, Sciarelli et al. (2017) reported that service recovery satisfaction positively influences customer satisfaction, which

eventually stimulates a higher sustainability level. In their developed framework, Díaz, Gómez, Martín-Consuegra, and Molina (2017) emphasised that the service recovery satisfaction of firms in the foodservice industry positively influences the firms' sustainability.

## **DISCUSSION**

The service recovery practices of the food industry are aimed at correcting failures to ensure justice and fairness in the delivery of services to increase the satisfaction of customers. In the restaurant industry of Ghana, the service recovery practices in the form of distributive, interactive, and informational positively influence the sustainability of the restaurants. Thus, besides the economic performance of the restaurants, their capacity to effectively employ social-friendly food management practices is also dependent on the effectiveness of service recovery strategies that stimulate patronage and re-patronage behavioural intention of customers. This study, therefore, supported the hypothesized positive and significant relationship between service recovery practices like interactive justice (H1c), informative justice (H1d), and social sustainability. The study also supported the hypothesized positive and significant relationship between service recovery practices like interactive justice (H2c), informative justice (H2d), and environmental sustainability. These findings are corroborated by the study of Reis et al. (2017) which reiterated the direct relationship between service recovery strategies of firms and the sustainability of the firms. A company's long-term reputation is reliant on customers' perceptions of how well the company takes care of customers and how concerned it is with their welfare (Doney & Cannon, 1997). It is therefore imperative to effectively carry out service recovery programs in repairing service failures to avoid any form of customer retaliation by the spread of negative word-of-mouth. This indicates that inadequate service recovery may lead to negative perceptions of the corporate social responsibility of a service provider, which falls under the social pillar of sustainability. The results of these could also lead to re-patronage intention and that can link with profit maximisation, and perceive corporate social responsibility (Chen et al., 2018). The satisfaction of customers with service recovery programmes of restaurants is vital to the sustainability of the firms in the industry. This study, therefore, reported a positive effect of the service recovery strategies of the restaurants on the satisfaction of customers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study investigated the effects of service recovery strategies on customer satisfaction and social sustainability. The findings would be helpful to Ghanaian restaurants that are now vehemently interested in minimizing the dissatisfaction of customers associated with service failures through distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice. Restaurant customers are now sophisticated in their demand and also due to competitive advantage in the restaurant sector, service providers are expected to adopt strategies that could retain their clients as well as attract new ones. There are increasing efforts by service providers to resolve problems responsively and fairly. Procedurally, the restaurants respond in a timely fashion, flexibly and fairly to complaints of customers. In their interaction with customers, the employees of the restaurants are honest, care and emphasize with customers. The practiced interactional and informational service recovery strategies of the restaurants stimulated a positive effect on the social sustainability of the restaurants. In addition, both interactional and informational service recovery strategies of the restaurants stimulated a higher level of satisfaction of customers.

**IMPLICATION TO THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Theoretically, the social exchange theory and the equity theory emphasise that the customers' dissatisfaction is redressed through service recovery strategies (Huseman et al., 1987; Chan et al., 2016; Msosa&Govender, 2019). From the perspective of the social exchange theory and the equity theory, service providers and customers are equal partners; hence require the exchange of money for restaurant services like food in a fair manner (Oliver, 1997). Any form of injustice sensed by customers mainly emanates from the perception of unfairness in terms of dissatisfaction with provided services (Oliver, 1997), which could force an attempt to balance equity with post-consumption behaviour (Lapidus& Pinkerton, 1995). In support of these theories, the service recovery justices like distributive, interactional and informational justices of the restaurants are reported to significantly stimulate a higher level of customer satisfaction in redressing service failures. This implies that many restaurants in Ghana, especially the highly graded ones in the industry are implementing justice strategies to redress any form of dissatisfaction to minimise any form of negative post-purchase behaviours. Nonetheless, practically, the implementation of service recovery strategies does not always redress service failure and minimise negative behaviours as there is an enormous difference in consumers' behaviour. This study, therefore, showed that procedural justice, although statistically not significant, was even negatively associated with the satisfaction of customers. This is a novel study in Ghana, as there is no study on service recovery strategies and social sustainability in Ghana's restaurant industry. Thus, this study is critical to bridging the knowledge gap on service recovery strategies and social sustainability of restaurants in Ghana.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the key findings and the drawn conclusion of the study, several suggestions have been made to the various stakeholders in the hospitality industry, especially to the restaurant sector to enhance customer satisfaction and sustainability through more effective service recovery strategies. The study recommended organisation of workshops, and other training programmes for the service providers.

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