

# Service recovery as social drama: How to redress service recovery encounters?

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## ABSTRACT

The interaction between a service employee and a customer is a dynamic process. It is a process where a mismatch between expectations of the customer and reality may lead to a breach in social interaction. A breach in the social interaction occurs when the current status quo is broken apart and is in need of redressive action by the service employee. The service employee has to come up with a justified solution in order to satisfy the customer. How these breaches contribute to the redressive action of a service employee is studied via an empirical study. The study into this phenomenon resulted in 30 cases where a breach occurred between a service employee and customer. Based on the gathered data an analysis is done to conclude how breaches influence the redressing of service interaction. This paper aims to dive into the social process of service recovery, as it pursues opening the black box on the social interactions itself. Determining what the effect of breaches in social interactions is and determining what course of action a service employee should use in certain situations can help to explain how a process of voicing the complaint to a state of redressing can come to be. With regard to redressive action, the paper contributes to the aspect of a *justified* solution to the customer's problem. The service employee can steer on different forms of justice to repair the breach and satisfy the customer. To come to justified solution a differentiation is made between two kinds of breaches: a process driven breach and an interactional driven breach. The difference in breaches required different behaviour from the service employees to satisfy the customer.

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## Keywords

Service recovery, breaches, justice, scripts and discretionary space.

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the topic of service recovery and the importance of understanding justified forms in relation to scripted or discretionary behaviour of service employees. The research will delve into the social interaction between a service employee and customer and will take a look at the discretionary space a service provider employee has during service recovery processes. Processes of service recovery are rarely studied, and this is important because service recovery is seen as a powerful tool for value creation for customers, but it requires empowerment of service employees (Tax & Brown, 1998; Hart, Heskett & Earl Sasser, 1990). Service recovery is described as the actions taken by an organization in response to a service failure. The reasons for service failure are very diverse (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2012). The effects of service recovery are quite positive. Research from Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekar (1998) suggested that investments in complaint handling can improve evaluations of service quality, strengthen customer relationships and build customer commitment. So far, service literature has advocated to use scripted service protocols and emphasize efficiency (Bowen & Lawer, 1994). The focus on scripts and protocol is at the expense of the discretionary space of the service employee, but this discretionary space is a very powerful tool to enhance service performance (Hart et al., 1990). However this empowerment of employees is especially important in a service environment since service recovery pre-eminently covers exceptional situations which require creative solutions from a service employee (Hart et al., 1990; Wilson et al., 2012).

Problems arise because customers most often do not want to get a standard 'quick fix' to their unique problem. If customers experience this, customers might resist finding a solution. Therefore, initial scripted behaviour by the service employee might not be enough to solve the customer's problem. The problem is that these service scripts can lead to breaches in the service recovery process when expectations of customers are not fulfilled and customers are still not satisfied with the service. McFarland (2004) describes a breach as resistance in social interaction process. "They are potential turning points in social situations where the social order gets deconstructed, debated, and reformed" (McFarland, 2004, p.1251). Breaches or breakdowns are described by Lok & de Rond (2012) as discrepancies between the expectations of the customer and the actual experience. Breaches as social drama can have an important effect as they might serve to deconstruct the scripts and routines and lead to possible solutions that were not anticipated at the beginning (Lok & de Rond, 2012) These breaches help in the service recovery process because they allow a service employee to use his own discretionary space to steer onto justice. A solution that is justified can involve three different types of justice. These different types are: "distributive justice (dealing with decision outcomes), procedural justice (dealing with decision-making procedures), and interactional justice (dealing with interpersonal behaviour in the enactment of procedures and delivery of outcomes)" (Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekar, 1998 p.62). The goal of this research is to examine how this works in practice.

The central research question will focus on the following problem: Service recovery is not easily generated due to the increasing amount of scripted and protocolled service, however empowerment is an opposite of the scripted and formal protocolled way of service delivery. This leads to a social

paradox, which is the fact that most services delivery is still a very protocolled and routinized which, may lead to dissatisfaction with customers because they are still not satisfied with the given solutions. This dissatisfaction may lead to breaches in the social interaction. The paper will investigate how breaches in the service recovery process lead to a solution that a customer considers as justified.

The research question is as follows.

*How does a breach occurring in service recovery processes contribute to a justified solution to initial customer complaints?*

To analyse the phenomenon of a breach in a social service environment an empirical study will be done where a qualitative analysis of service encounters will be made. The study will consist of the analysis of 30 service recovery encounters between customer and service employee. It will be examined how discrepancies between expectation and reality lead to a breach and how a service employee handles this situation. Furthermore, the paper includes the analysis of the data and based on the analysis a conclusion will be drawn.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Service failure

A customer who experiences a service failure can react in several ways. A customer can, after feeling dissatisfaction, either choose to complain or not to take any action. If a customer decides to complain, the customer can decide to either stay at the service provider or decide to switch provider and *exit* the service relationship the customer has with the provider, thus meaning the customer will go to another provider. The focus of the thesis will lie in the complaint action interface, and how a service provider handles the complaint.

A model by Tax et al. (1998), which goes into the complaint action phase further elaborates on the different actions that can be taken by the service provider. The model states that when a customer complains to a firm, the outcome can be based on three different forms of justice. The model states that there either can be a case of *interactional justice*, *procedural justice*, or *distributive justice*.

### Scripted service

Scripted service consists of institutionalized service protocols, which have the following characteristics according to Lok & de Rond (2012). The service protocols are distributed over time – they have been the same for years – and over space – the service protocol is the same everywhere for every same service employee in the organization. The service protocol is also highly routinized- the organizational principals and legitimacy and logic are taken for granted and reinforced through socialization processes. On the other side of the spectrum is the discretionary space of a service employee.

Opposite of protocols and routine is an employee's ability and power to act on his own. Empowerment constitutes of encouraging and rewarding employees to take initiative and imagination. 'Empowerment in many ways is the reverse of doing things by the book' (Bowen & Lawer, 1994). The discretionary space is the difference between the protocolled service action and the actual action of an employee.

It can be said that these scripted services often can lead to a service recovery paradox, as service recovery is often still a very scripted process.

The paradox is that the process is initially scripted and it is these scripted processes that may lead to these breaches in service recovery due to the fact that customers are still not satisfied with the service. The breach in service recovery may very well be an important aspect in order to redress the situation as a service employee. The link to a breach in a service encounter is what kind of effect this has on service redressing. Whilst redressing the situation with the customer, should he stick to the service protocols or should he make use of his discretionary space?

## Breaches

Building on this theoretical framework the paper will focus more on a specific moment in the service delivery, namely a so-called breach in service delivery. In the work of McFarland, (2004) there is written of resistance in social interaction. Resistance is defined as the “interpersonal process arising in actual social settings” (McFarland, 2004, p.1251). In the case of this paper the actors of the social process are the service employee and the customer, where both parties try to change the current social order. The social order is defined by the status by which both parties enter their social interaction. McFarland (2004) describes these social interactions as dramas consisting of dramatic episodes of social action that erupt from routine social life. Resistance constitutes a social situation that is potentially turned and get deconstructed, debated and reformed. The social dramas follow a time plot with a beginning, middle and an end. “Actors recognize this process and attempt to cue different stages and plot structures that define the larger social drama, directing it down various sequential paths of their choosing” (McFarland, 2004, p.1251). It will be investigated how both actors handle when a sudden change-or resistance-takes place in the social interaction between service employee and customer.

Both actors enter the interaction and have different expectations at different time stadiums of the process. The way this happens is that through different stages of the social interaction the social position and order is broken down and then it is either built up in the same old way or it is constructed into a new form (McFarland, 2004). According to McFarland (2004) the act of resistance or *breach* can be divided into two stages, there is the *ceremonial deconstruction*, the phase where the current status quo is broken up and the *ceremonial reconstruction*, where the current status is resolved and a new agreement is formed so that both actors can accept the situation.

The two initial stages can be further reduced in two other stages respectively (Turner, 1974). The deconstruction stage can be divided in a breach and crisis stage and the reconstruction phase can be further reduced to a stage of redressing and reintegration.

The theory further described McFarland (2004) states that after the first breach, the problem can either implode or it can explode and form a crisis. “The breach escalates as one claim of unfairness snowballs into a series of collective remarks about competence, cruelty, style, and so on” (McFarland, 2004, p.1253).

The model used by McFarland (2004) is shown below and depicts the four different stages in a social conflict.

When an employee realizes a breach occurs and the situation may not be redressable with the institutionalized scripts, he needs to probe into his discretionary space. The service employee will have to steer on a form of justice to redress the breach. These redressive actions now taken by the service employee will determine the outcome of the conflict in terms of forms of justice that matches the customer’s expectation. Now the service employee can either steer on interactional justice, procedural justice, or distributive justice. The social conflict will at some point reach the final stage where both parties will *reintegrate* the current situation or, at the other extreme, recognise that there is a conflict between them that cannot be resolved.

## Forms of justice

Justice or fairness is something customers receive when it comes to the handling of their complaints. A service employee will steer on the forms of justice during the redressing stage. The *outcome* fairness can be described as the results that a customer receives from a complaint. When a customer decides to complain, outcome fairness can be achieved by compensating the customer up to a level that they feel satisfied with the outcome. The customer wants to be compensated in the same way that any other customer would have been compensated if they had the same problem (Wilson et al., 2012). Procedural fairness refers to the policies, rules and timeliness of the complaint process (Wilson et al., 2012). This means that customers seek fairness in the procedures and rules. The customer wants to be able to voice his or her complain easily and quickly. A fair procedure means that the solving of the problem is done with clarity, speed and with any absence of difficulties. For example, a customer does not want to have to speak to five people within a company before he is finally able to voice his complaint. Interactional fairness refers to interpersonal treatment received during the complaint process (Wilson et al., 2012). Meaning the courteousness of the service employee, how well is the customer being treated in terms of manners and respect. A service employee can calmly explain why there has been a problem or what the current status of a complaint is.

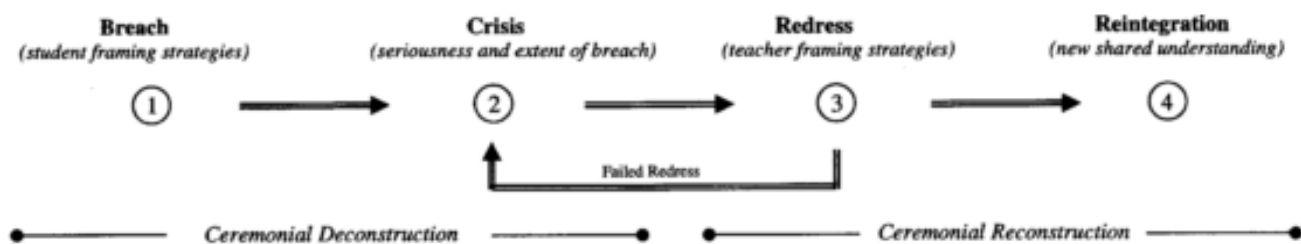


Figure 1. (McFarland, 2004, p.1255)

However a rude attitude towards the customer or lacking interest in the customer's problem will result in low interactional fairness (Wilson et al., 2012). The steering on a form of justice gives the employee a handle to steer on in order to satisfy a customer. Before a breach, scripts and routines define the form of justice, which is steered on by an employee, after a breach his own initiative and discretionary space will determine on what kind of justice is steered on by the employee.

In conclusion, the theoretical model, describing the situation that will be researched is depicted in the following flowchart.

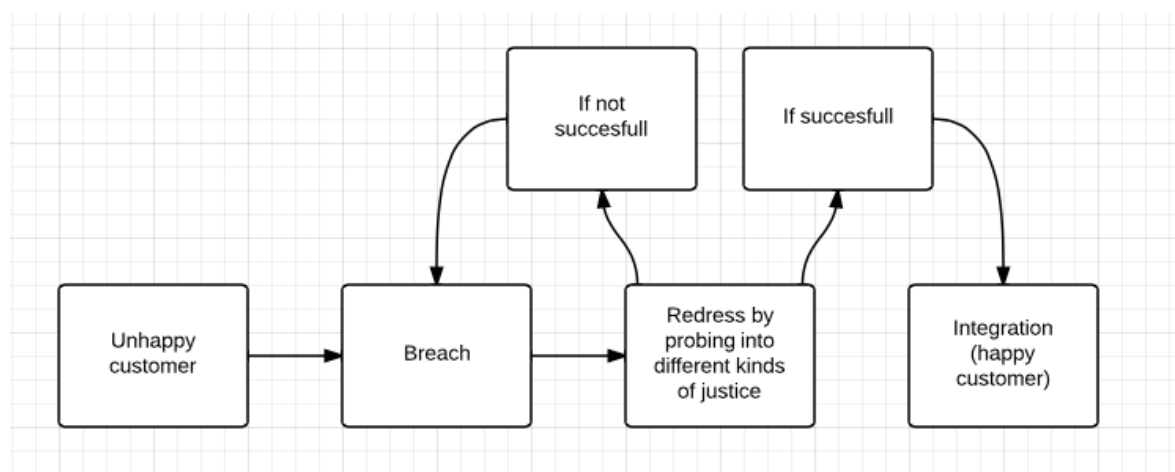


Figure 2. Conceptual model of breaches and redress during service recovery processes.

## METHOD SECTION

In this section, the conceptual model is operationalized first. After that, the method is discussed including the sample, followed by data collection and analysis techniques.

### Operationalization

The conceptual model is operationalized by observing the following steps:

- 1 The start of the process. The customer decides to voice his/her complaint with the service employee and thus the conversation between both parties starts. The customer voices his complaint or explains the problem he faces.
- 2 Expectations. The customer has expectations about how the service interaction will take place. The same goes for the service employee, he also has expectations on how the interaction with the customer will go.
- 3 Discrepancy between the expectations and reality. If the actual interaction does not go according to the scripts from both parties a discrepancy will occur and this heralds a breach.

- 4 A Breach. The social order has been broken down and is subject for repair work.
- 5 Redress. The service employee has to take actions to redress the situation. The service employee can either steer on interactional justice, procedural justice, or distributive justice. Whilst steering on the forms of justice he can decide to remain stubborn and stick to protocol or he can use his own initiative to resolve the breach,
- 6 Form of justice. The employee has taken actions to redress the situation based on steering on any of the three forms of justice. The breach should now be redressed and the social contract is reintegrated.

### Empirical study

A qualitative analysis will be done by describing cases on three different key points:

The first is the description of the individual case itself, what is the empirical phenomenon that has happened? The second is the description of the institutional threat. What is the protocolled way to react in this kind of situation and what makes this situation so that a breach has occurred? The third point is the description of the restoration response. What has the service employee done to redress the situation?

In order to study this phenomenon an empirical study will be executed at a supermarket called Albert Heijn in the city of Kampen to describe and analyse how service recovery processes are recovered through breaches. A service employee in the Albert Heijn is the service desk employee who has the task of addressing any problems customers of the supermarket might endure whilst buying their groceries. Albert Heijn is an organization, which has a scripted service protocol; Albert Heijn uses so-called manuals of service. Albert Heijn has a protocol for every situation and in the manuals it is written which actions every service employee should follow. The definitions of Lok & de Rond (2012) on service protocol also apply to Albert Heijn, as the service protocol has been the same for years, and are the same in every Albert Heijn.

The protocol is also highly routinized and repetitive (Feldman & Pentland, 2003) as no one questions the protocol and the legitimacy is accepted by its employees and via the social process of training an employee and letting him/her familiarise with the protocol the current standards are maintained. In other words, the scripts available are taken-for-granted. The discretionary space of the employee at Albert Heijn is observed by defining the difference between the protocolled actions of service recovery and his actual actions. If actions of the employee differ from what protocol dictates should be done he makes use of discretionary space to act at his own insights and takes initiative.

The forms of justice will be observed by using a scheme drawn up by Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekar (1998). The scheme provides definitions and variables for the three different

concepts of justice. These variables will help to define observed behaviour and thus it will be possible to differentiate on what kind of justice the service employee is steering. The complete scheme can be seen in the appendix. The unresolved cases may remain in the feedback loop, as they suffer from failed redress despite the solutions a service employee was trying to present (McFarland, 2004).

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data of the observations where a breach between service employee and customer occurred have been gathered and analysed via qualitative methods. These methods included sitting behind the service desk and taking notes of the displayed behaviour. Induced, from the data it may be possible to conclude what effect breaches have on service recovery processes. The 30 cases give insight in what the employee decided to do and the satisfaction of the customer.

A total of 30 cases have been collected between the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2014 and the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2014. The cases consisted of 11 male customers and 19 female customers. Whilst observing, the data has been coded with the help of a scheme. The data is shown in appendix 3. The aspects of the forms of justice and its concepts are coded in *italic* in the scheme.

One of the first things that are noticeable is the general kindness and friendliness of the service employees at the Albert Heijn. This particular Albert Heijn has set high standards regarding the attitude of its service employees. And in general, most service employees display a positive willingness to help the customer. This positive willingness to help a customer matches with interactional justice as it can be seen that most employees make an effort to help the customers with their problems. Also, service employees show empathy for customer problems. Other general observations include the fact that *empathy* is an attribute that is widespread among service employees. *Process* and *decision control* are also two attributes that are implicitly present. Service employees and customers are free to discuss the outcomes of service redressing.

A key trend that was observed was the fact that when service employees are steering on protocol and rules, it is often goes hand in hand with interactional justice. Employees are using *honesty* and *politeness* to explain what the rule is and that there cannot be a deviation from the rule as illustrated by case 5, 15, 17, 19 and 20.

When discretionary space is used, a service employee is more likely to steer on distributive and procedural justice.

This is illustrated in numerous cases including 3, 8, 9, 13, 14, 20, 23, 24 and 25. A service employee who initially steered on protocol to repair the breach faces two possible outcomes. Either the customer accepts the explanation of the service employee or a new breach occurs when this explanation of rules is not accepted and the service employee then steers on other forms of justice to repair the second breach.

Another observation from the data was the fact that it seemed difficult for an employee to repair a breach whilst steering on distributive justice. When a service employee steered on distributive justice, it seemed difficult to also steer on procedural justice and *timing/speed*. When a difficult decision had to be made, most often a superior had to be consulted and most often this took quite a lot of time, leading to frustration from the customers. This phenomenon illustrated in case 2, 7, 20 and 22. This is explained by the fact that the decision proved to be difficult to make for the service employee. A customer had to be convinced by a superior enforcing that same decision. The service employee did not solve the initial breach, but the superior most often acted quickly and solved the breach.

Another factor, which is also having an influence on the service employee, is variable *time-pressure*. This variable includes the amount of perceived time a service employee has to redress the breach in the social interaction and the resulting pressure of having a queue of customers to serve. An example of a negative influence of this time pressure can be found in case #10. When a customer asked a rather common question to the service employee, a high amount of time-pressure resulted in a negative resolution of the breach.

A common factor among the breaches was the fact that most of the breaches between service employees and customers were rather implicit. Meaning that a true difference of opinion was not often very distinct. An example can be seen in case #19, where the customer implicitly had expectations of the service employee, which the service employee did not fulfil. The service employee implicitly repaired the breach by steering on protocol. Observed was also that emotions influence which form of justice is steered on, this is illustrated by case #20. The customers got agitated and started to intimidate the service employee who changed behaviour and steering on a different form of justice. Whilst first looking rather benevolent towards the customer, after the customer started raising his voice and threatening the service employee to get his way, the behaviour of the service employee changed drastically. Case #22 also illustrates this phenomenon. The temper of a customer, and the resulting severity of the breach can alter the direction of steering of a service employee. In #22 the service employee went from interactional to distributive justice to repair the breach. Even though the customer got irritated because the service employee steered on interactional justice and thus protocol, most of the time, steering on interactional justice helps prevent the escalation of a breach.

On page 8 a table is drawn up depicting the occurring breaches and the repair work done by the service employee. The table is drawn up with the help of Heaphy (2013) who laid the foundation for this scheme. The first distinction made is the different causes of breaches observed. The first kind is caused due to breaches the interpersonal relations between service employee and customer whilst the second kind is caused due breaches in the operational process.

The interpersonal breach can have causes created by deviant behaviour of both service employee and customer. This is a result of expectations not being fulfilled, both parties have a certain expectation of the other party's behaviour and when not living up to that expectation a breach may form.

The second kind of breach is not a result of interpersonal friction but a result of process failure. When the expectations of a customer regarding the service process are not being met, a breach occurs. As can be seen in the table, most of the cases (63%) regarded a process breach. This is in accordance with the fact that a supermarket is a very process driven environment and that most of the time customers did go to the service desk to complain about a process going wrong. Furthermore it is shown which form of justice the service employee used to repair the different kind of breaches. Analysed from the data it became clear what of justice forms were used. In the process breach all kinds of justice occurred to repair the breach. As this was the most occurring breach, a service employee needed to use a wide range of justice aspects to repair the breach and give the customer a justified solution. The interpersonal breaches leaned much more towards interactional justice as a breach in social interaction needed friendliness and personal effort of the service employee to repair the breach.

The effect of the breach repair work is depicted at the end where it shows what kind of effect the behaviour of the service employee had. Most of the effects are direct solution to the initial breach, however the process breach repair work had one extra consequence. It created an atmosphere where it became more accepted for service employees to use discretionary space in order to satisfy the customer. Even though there are protocols to be followed a service organization such as Albert Heijn values the satisfaction of customers very much and this is reflected in the atmosphere that lived among the employees. Where they regarded it as rather 'normal' to make an exemption for a specific customer or giving a little bit more effort to come up with a justified solution to the existing problem.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper is the answer to the research question stated in the beginning of the paper. Namely, "how does a breach occurring in service recovery processes contribute to a justified solution to initial customer complaints?" The data of 30 cases was gathered to take a look how in a service setting a service employee repaired breaches that occurred in the interaction. The breaches contributed to the finding of a solution because a breach forms a signal or trigger for the employee to take action. An occurring breach requires that a service employee take action to give the customer a justified solution to their problem. The breach will result in the fact that a form of justice is steered on by the service employee to repair the breach. When the initial repair attempt of a service employee is not accepted and both parties are thrown back in the redressive phase because the initial attempt to repair the breach is not accepted, a service employee often has to make use of his discretionary space to try to repair the breach. This second repair attempt only occurred after the customer rejected a scripted service protocol and the customer demanded more from the service employee because the initial solution was not seen as justified.

Another factor influencing the behaviour of the service employee is the behaviour of the customer whilst being helped by the service employee. Cases illustrated that the temper (emotion) of the customer altered the steering pattern of the service employee.

Whilst a service employee may have been inclined to repair the breach with the use of discretionary space, an aggressive or unfriendly customer changed the steering pattern of the service employee so that the employee decided to suddenly stick to protocol.

Indicating that the approach or behaviour of the customer towards the service also can help decide the outcome of a breach. As a service employee is after all a human being who can be influenced and charmed by a customer in order to get what he wants. However rude behaviour will result in a solution, which is not seen as justified by the customer.

Furthermore a set of other variables, such as time-pressure and the fact that a customer might get aggressive or the fact that there is a long queue in front of the service desk is co-determining how a service employee solves the breach. The time-pressure variable may also lead to very unjustified solution for the customer. The reaction of the service employee is influenced by the perceived amount of time the employee has to make a decision as a very busy situation may lead to an outcome, which the customer sees as unjustified.

A further distinction is made between the kinds of breaches occurring in the service environment. An interpersonal breach, where differences between expectations and reality about behaviour of both parties resulted in a breach and process breaches, where differences between expectations and reality of the service process resulted in a breach. Both set of breaches occurred in different forms of justice. Whilst process breaches were very diverse and required the skill of the service employee in every of the justice forms, interpersonal breaches required interactional justice and friendliness of the employee to restore the faith of the customer in the service employee. Meaning that the form of breach contributed to what a customer thought of as a justified solution. One last important effect of the process breaches was the creation of an atmosphere where it became more accepted for service employees to satisfy the customer with the help of discretionary space as they described it as 'normal' to make an extra effort for the customer.

## DISCUSSION

The intent of this study was to give insight how breaches occurring in service recovery contribute to finding a justified solution. The data has been gathered from 30 cases that have been collected from an empirical study performed at a local supermarket. The conclusion of the research proved interesting due to the fact that several factors seem to influence employee behaviour and the redressing of a breach. One of those variables is *time pressure*, which is an interesting topic for further research as it influences the behaviour of service employees. Foundations have been laid by Yoshioka, Herman, Yates, & Orlikowski (2001) with regard to time and location in communicative actions. They take a look at the role of time with regard to communication, which would help to study the phenomenon of time-pressure in interaction between customer and service employee. The conclusions that were made by analysing the data fit in with the work of McFarland (2004) regarding the forms of justice as this paper found that breaches, investigated earlier by Lok & de Rond (2012) form a signal for an employee to act and steer on forms of justice. This paper builds on that existing literature and adds different dimension to the breach occurring in the service process.

This paper distinguished two forms of breaches, process and interpersonal breaches, which required different forms and a wide array of forms of justice to solve. Furthermore the paper looked the effect of the repair work on the breaches and found that most breaches have a direct solution. However an interesting phenomenon was observed with the repair work done regarding process breaches.

It resulted in employees accepting more and more to tap into discretionary space and in this way it was seen as normal. It would be interesting to do further research in the form of longitudinal work, in order to see if this is a short trend or if it may form and embed itself in the culture of an organization over time. A limitation to the data gathering itself has been the fact that observations have been done in such a setting that it was clear for the participants that they were observed, the location and time of the study did not allow for invisible observation. A limitation to the research has been the very localised form of data gathering, where only one location has been used. The amount of cases is limited to 30, which limits the external validity. More follow-up study at different locations should be done in order to further understand the effect of breaches in service recovery. A limitation also comes in the fact that only a supermarket as service interaction location has been used, in order to a more in-depth idea of the phenomenon it is advised to use different locations as well. Multiple locations and different kind of interaction landscapes make it possible to compare different situations so that explaining variables may be found for differences in solving breaches. Another limitations is formed by the fact that there has not been differentiated on the variable of age of customers. For a future ethnomethodology study it may be very interesting to see if age has something to do with how a breach is solved and if there is a difference in acceptance of solutions.

**Table 1. Breaches and their repair work by service employees**

Cause of breach	What was breached	Prevalence	%	Repair of breach using form of justice		
				Interactional	Procedural	Distributive
<b>Interpersonal breaches</b>						
<i>Serv. employee treatment</i>						
behaviour towards customers	Expectations about behaviour and competence of service employee	2	6,67%	✓	-	-
						One encounter lead to disappointment and negative breach whilst the other was solved by friendliness of employee.
<i>Customer threat</i>						
	Service employee expectations that customers are compliant willing recipients of help offered to them by service employees	3	10%	✓	✓	-
						Restored employees believes that customer was willing to receive help from service employee, whilst one encounter was solved without interactional justice another was solved by sticking to protocol because of customer treat.
<i>Service decision making</i>						
	Expectation from customer that they have a say in the solving of the problem process	6	20%	✓	✓	-
						Explaining the rules to customers informed them of procedures and emphasized that service employee was taking the decision
<b>Operational breaches</b>						
<i>Novelty breach</i>						
Customers treated poorly or inconvenienced in an unfamiliar situation	Customers expectations that they are helped in their best interest	6	20%	-	✓	✓
						Customer were sometimes positively surprized by the solution they got from the service employee regarding their problem. Enforced faith in receiving a proper solution.
<i>Process breach</i>						
Customers treated poorly or inconvenienced in an familiar situation	Customers expectations that they are helped in their best interest	13	43,33%	✓	✓	✓
						As well as that the customer got faith in a justified solution to their problem, it also became more accepted for service employees to make use of discretionary space
	Total	30	100%			

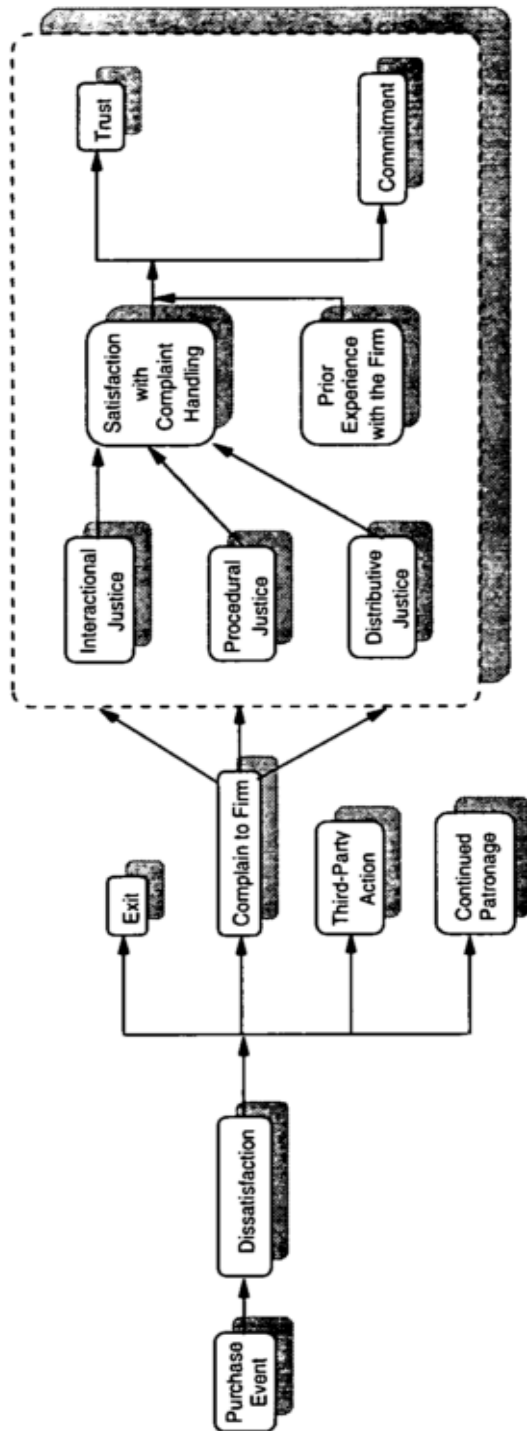


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# APPENDIX

Appendix 1 (Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekar 1998, p.61)



<b>Justice Concept</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Distributive Justice</b>	
Equity	Provision of outcomes proportional to inputs to an exchange
Equality	Equal outcomes regardless of contributions to an exchange
Need	Outcome based on requirements regardless of contributions
<b>Procedural Justice</b>	
Process Control	Freedom to communicate views on a decision process
Decision Control	Extent to which a person is free to accept or reject a decision outcome
Accessibility	Ease of engaging a process
Timing/Speed	Perceived amount of time taken to complete a procedure
Flexibility	Adaptability of procedures to reflect individual circumstances
<b>Interactional Justice</b>	
Explanation/Causal Account	Provision of reason for a failure
Honesty	Perceived veracity of information provided
Politeness	Well-mannered, courteous behavior
Effort	Amount of positive energy put into resolving a problem

### Appendix 3. Data

#	Sex	Empirical phenomenon	Description of the institutional threat	Restoration response.
1	F	A woman bought three bottles of champagne, claiming that the price she paid for the product was not right. The advertised price differed from the price she paid.	A customer should normally pay what a price tag indicated. The product was lacking a price tag and the woman mistakenly thought the price tag next to the product was the price of the champagne she bought.	The service employee explained curiously what the mistake was. ( <i>Politeness</i> ) ( <i>Empathy</i> ) The service employee solved the problem by stating it was not her fault and solved the problem by refunding her money even though she was not right. The employee used <i>discretionary space</i> because according to protocol she would not be allowed a partial refund.
2	F	A woman asked to receive multiple discount coupons booklets at the service desk because she needed them for other people.	A person is normally only allowed to receive one booklet at a time.	The service employee, after discussing it with the direct superior decided to give away four booklets. The service employee steered on interactional justice. Process was slowed due to the fact that her superior was consulted. Also steering on <i>need</i> . (distributive justice)
3	M	A man brought two beers bottles, which the recycling machine did not accept. He asked to receive the packaging deposit money of which he claimed to be entitled to.	A bottle, which is not accepted by the recycling machine, is normally not accepted by the store to be returned by the customer and claim the packaging deposit money.	The service employee regarded it as perfectly normal to accept the bottles even though the machine would not accept them. The service employee decided to refund the man his money. Steering on <i>procedural justice</i> , by <i>accessibility</i> . Normally a painful procedure, it was solved by the service employee by refunding the money.
4	F	A woman wanted to take her products, which she just bought at the service desk, into the store itself.	In the store section no products that have been previously bought are allowed. Only products that are not sold in the supermarket are allowed.	The service employee said it was allowed to take the products into the store, making an exception for the customer. Steering on outcome justice. "Need"
5	F	A woman received a "free lottery ticket" as a price from a specific lottery ticket. She wanted to pick the kind of "free" lottery ticket she would receive from winning the price.	If you win a "free" lottery ticket from a specific kind of lottery ticket, you get the same lottery ticket for "free" as result. This is the price you win, a new ticket.	The service employee <u>explained</u> with <i>politeness</i> , what the rules regarding the winning of a "free" lottery ticket were. The service employee redressed the breach by steering on interactional justice. Remaining very <i>polite</i> , and <i>courteous</i> whilst the woman insisted on picking her own lottery ticket. The customer told the service employee that at other stores she was allowed to pick her own ticket. By <u>stressing on the rules</u> regarding the tickets the woman eventually accepted the situation.
6	M	A customer came to the service desk claiming a product had a different price than was advertised. This time it was not an official discount product but had been marked unofficially as a discount product.	The price tag of a product always shows the correct and current price of a product. Which includes this weeks "discount" products. These products are also displayed in a special discount booklet named <i>bonusfolder</i> .	The product did not have an indicated discount price in the booklet and the card in front of the product also did not indicate a lower price. However, the customer raised his voice claiming that it was definitely the case that the product had a discount price. The employee solved this by steering on <i>procedural justice</i> , <i>timing</i> and <i>speed</i> . Whilst

				reluctantly giving the discount price to the customer. No interactional justice was observed. The employee was not really keen on giving the discount price due to fact that the customer was rather assertive.
7	M	A man bought loads of packets of butter with the idea in mind that they only were €1, - per package. The price turned out to be much higher per packet and the man wanted to receive the price he believed was right.	The price of product always corresponds to the price on the price tag.	The procedure took a while because the service employee had to go into the store and check what the price tag indicated. The service employee could not find an initial solution. After the breach, a superior acted quickly with <i>speed</i> , stating that it was ok to only pay €1, - for one packet. The superior acted with his discretionary space and also proved to be very <i>flexible</i> .
8	M	A man was convinced he did not receive enough money from the cashier whilst paying for his groceries and came to claim his money that he did not receive according to himself.	A person is always given the right amount of money because the cash register acts as a calculator and prescribes the exact amount of money that a cashier should return to a customer.	The service employee who recounted the money and then explained how a cash register works and that no mistake was made quickly redressed the situation. The man was initially very upset because of the missing money. But the <i>calmness</i> of the service employee made sure that the situation did not escalate. The service employee <u>explained</u> where the mistake had been made by the man himself, because he turned out not to have counted properly. Sticking to interactional justice prevented the situation from escalating.
9	F	A woman claimed she never received the buy-stamps she bought a couple of days ago at the store.	When someone buys buy-stamps and they are entered in the cash register and paid for, they are given to the customer. A customer always gets the stamps because a manual entry into the system is necessary.	The service employee redressed the situation by giving the collector stamps to the customer even though she could not check if she did or did not receive them. The service employee acted <i>flexible</i> and with <i>empathy</i> . ( <i>Procedural justice</i> .)
10	F	<u>Negative breach</u> . A customer wanted to go to the customer toilet because there was no toilet in the neighbourhood. She asked the service employee to be allowed to go to the toilet.	If a customer asks if he can make use of the toilet an employee should guide the customer to the toilet. In case of a child, a parent or elder should always be with them.	The service employee stated that there was no customer toilet and thus was not able to help the customer. Not a form of justice was steered on. Only on a negative form of <i>honesty</i> and <i>effort</i> and <i>equality</i> . It could be clearly seen that time pressure and the fact that it was rush hour in the store guided <u>this decision</u> to tell the customer that the store did not have a customer toilet.
11	M	A man came to the information desk wanting to return the fabric softener he bought a couple of days ago. It turned out to be the wrong kind. He wanted a refund for the product even though he did not have a receipt.	Products of which the customer has a receipt, are the only products who are allowed to be returned or refunded	The service employee decided to refund the money the customer paid for the fabric softener, even though he did not have a receipt. Service employee steered on <i>Need</i> ( <i>distributive justice</i> )
12	F	A woman came to the service desk wanting to return a DVD she bought a couple of days ago, which turned out to be not working properly. The service employee first was very	Products, of which the customer has a receipt, are the only products that are allowed to be returned or refunded.	The service employee steered on <i>empathy</i> , as the DVD turned out to be bought for the woman's son, who was very disappointed because he could not watch the DVD. The service employee acted out of <i>empathy</i> because he did

		<i>courteous</i> to look for the problem. And first trying to steer on <i>Interactional justice</i> . It was determined that it was not the TV or DVD-player who where at fault. The customer explained that other DVDs were working fine.		decide to refund the woman her DVD. Also steering on <i>need</i> .
13	M	A man came to the service desk claiming he left his steak at the cash register whilst shopping for groceries a few hours ago.	Products that are left behind by customers need to be logged in a special file so that service employees can check if the product indeed has been forgotten.	The product appeared not to be in the special logging file. The product in question turned out to be a very expensive steak. The man explained that he was cooking dinner and suddenly he found out his steak was missing. The service employee acted with <i>empathy</i> and <i>timing</i> and <i>speed</i> . The service employee gave the man a new, and thus free steak so that he could continue to cook his dinner.
14	M	A man came to return a product, which turned out to be the wrong one cook his meat in. He did not have a receipt.	Products are only allowed to be returned or refunded if the customer has a receipt of the product	The service employee acted with <i>timing</i> and <i>speed</i> and refunded the man his money. The service employee steered on procedural justice.
15	M	A man came to the service desk wanting to send a package via the postal service. He claimed the package already had enough postage on it so that it could be send without any additional costs.	Packages, which have been sent from the postal service, should either be a package to a freepost address, which means they require no postage. Or if the packages require postage, they should have a barcode on them from which they entered into the system. If a customer buys postage at the service desk to send a package, the package will be given a barcode.	The package did not contain a barcode, however the man had the illusion that his package already had postage on it. The service employee <u>explained</u> that a package requires a barcode. Sticking to protocol the service employee said that a package did require a barcode and that without a barcode, a package cannot be send. The customer accepted this <u>explanation</u> and decided to return home and check to see if he could recover a barcode so that he does not have to pay for postage (€6,75).
16	F	A woman wanted to turn a crate of empty beer bottles for the packaging deposit money, but the machine refused to accept the crate.	The machine should automatically accept all bottles and crates of beer, which are sold in the store.	The service employee tried different solutions so that the woman could turn in the crate of beer. Unfortunately nothing worked; she then decided to call in a co-worker who could help her with the problem. The service employee steered on <i>Need</i> and solved the problem by refunding the money.
17	F	A woman wanted to buy cigarettes but did not have a valid ID with her.	All customers below the age of 25 need to show an official ID-card if they want to buy cigarettes or alcohol.	The customer in question turned out to be 24 years old, which means she should show an ID-card. She did not have an official document with her, but she did have a public transport card with her. The service employee responded with the <u>explanation</u> that an official document was necessary. The service employee was <i>polite</i> and <i>honest</i> about the situation. The customer accepted this <u>explanation</u> even though she was old enough to be allowed to buy cigarettes and left the store.
18	F	A woman came to the service desk claiming that a certain baby food product was priced at €1, -	It is regulatory that baby food can never be sold at a discount price. This is against the law.	After consulting with a co-worker. The service employee explained that protocol was that this was never allowed, but because it was advertised in the store, she

				would be allowed to buy the baby food at €1, - The service employee steered on <i>need</i> . The service employee made use of discretionary space because rules dictate that the service employee was not allowed to sell the product for €1, -
19	F	A woman came to the information desk with the question if the advertised price of a bouquet of roses was the right price. The roses were not in a very well condition anymore and with her body language and her intonation also implicitly implied that she expected a reduction in price.	Flowers and plants always have the current price on a price tag. Flowers also have an ultimate selling day. After this date, flowers are not allowed to be sold. The day before this day, flowers are given a 35% price reduction sticker.	The service employee noticed the implicit remarks from the customer and decided not to indulge. She <u>explained</u> what the rules were regarding flowers and plants and, without telling the customer, decided that she should pay the same price as everyone else. The service employee decided to stick to <u>protocol</u> .
20	M	A man came to the service desk wanting to buy a pack of cigarettes, however he did not have a valid ID with in but he claimed to be 28 years old.	All customers below the age of 25 need to show an official ID-card if they want to buy cigarettes of alcohol.	The service employee who initially helped the man did not exactly know what to do in this situation. The man claimed to be 28, so he would not be obliged to show an ID-card. So the service employee consulted with the superior. The superior <u>explained</u> what the rules are. But the estimation of age is subjective so it was observable that he initially was willing to let this one slide. Steering on <i>outcome justice</i> . However then another breach happened, suddenly the customer raised his voice and became angry and started to intimidate the employees. This resulted in a sudden change of behaviour of the service employee. A shift was noticeable in behaviour; the service employee suddenly was not <i>sympathetic</i> anymore. He switched to his initial stance that a valid ID was necessary and without it, he would not be allowed to buy the cigarettes.
21	F	A woman came to the information desk with a can of beans of which she believed had a double discount price. It came from a discount bin which were €1, - per product, but did not have a special 35% discount sticker.	All products from the discount bin have a price of €1, -. Otherwise they have the standard price.	The service employee <u>explained</u> how the discount bin works. All products placed in there already have a discount price of €1, -. She told the customer that the 35% sticker on some products was an old discount action. The service employee steered on interactional justice, whilst explaining how <u>protocol</u> works.
22	F	A woman came to the service desk explaining that a mobile phone prepaid card fell onto the conveyer belt. The cashier did not know she did not wanted to buy the prepaid credit card, so she ended up paying 20 euros.	A mobile prepaid card is a product that cannot be returned or refunded.	The service employee first tried to steer on <i>interactional justice</i> because she did not have an immediate solution. The service employee had to council her superior. The customer became upset because this would take more time. No procedural justice observed. The superior had <i>empathy</i> for the customer because she could understand it happened by accident. Because of the temper of the customer she decided to steer on <i>distributive justice</i> and refund the mobile credit card.

23	F	A woman came to the information desk with the problem that she did not receive the discount that was promised in the folder.	The rules for this action were that you need 3 specific products and then you receive your discount.	It turned out the customer had a 'regular' discount product and not a product that was part of the action. Initially the service employee <u>explained</u> (interactional justice) the rules regarding the discount action and stated that this was the reason she did not receive her discount. She had 2 products instead of the required 3. The woman did not accept this solution. In the second solution by the service employee she steered on <i>distributive justice</i> , giving the woman her discount, even though she was officially not entitled to receive it.
24	F	A woman came to the service desk wanting to get a refund for a shirt she bought at the Albert Heijn. She did have a receipt. However, it turned out that this shirt was bought at another Albert Heijn.	Returns or refunds for are only allowed for products bought at the same store.	The service employee did not see, that the product came from a different store, at first. After discovering this fact, the service employee initially responded a little hesitant to refund the product. When the customer claimed that all stores are the same, stating "Albert Heijn is Albert Heijn", the service employee was more willing and could agree on this argument. Steering of <i>flexibility</i> and <i>need</i> the woman got her refund.
25	F	A woman came to the service desk asking if a packet of cigarettes she bought last week had been found.	All products that are forgotten by customers are written down a special file. If it is not in this file, the product has not been found.	The service employee had <u>empathy</u> for the customer stating that it was a shame she forgot her pack of cigarettes. The service employee looked in the file and did not find the cigarettes there and <u>explained</u> how the rules regarding forgotten products work. The customer accepted this explanation and left.
26	F	A woman came to the service counter asking if she could receive one extra stamp. You get one stamp for every 10 euros you buy. She did groceries for €29,40.	All customers get one stamp per €10, -.	The service employee explained that the rules were and tried steering on <i>interactional justice</i> with <i>honesty</i> . The customer however found it quite silly that on a 0,40 cent different she did not receive a 3 <sup>rd</sup> stamp. The customer got a little aggravated and the service employee repaired the breach by acting <i>swiftly</i> and giving the 3 <sup>rd</sup> stamp to the customer. The service employee steered on <i>need</i> and <i>speed</i> .
27	M	A man came to the service desk with the story that he wanted to buy a can of milk and whilst searching in the shelf he came across a package that was well over its expiration date.	All products in the store are only allowed to be sold within their expiration date. Only if a customer did already buy a product that was past expiration date, a refund is allowed.	The customer had not even bought the package of milk, but the service employee could see that the customer was not happy to find a package of milk a month past expiration date. The service employee rhetorically asked, "well I can imagine you won't be keen to buying milk right now, but how about orange juice?" The customer responded that he did like orange juice and the service employee gave him a free compensatory bottle of orange juice. This act coincides with <i>empathy</i> , as well as <i>flexibility</i> .
28	F	A woman came to the service desk with a special discount coupon that a customer receives if a product was out of stock in a	A discount coupon is only valid for the week after it has been issued.	The service employee did find this a problem at all and was more than willing to extend the date on the coupon. The service employee acted very <i>flexible</i> and



		certain week. A coupon is valid the week after it has been issued. The date on the coupon had expired. She asked if the coupon could be extended.		with <i>speed</i> and decided to manually extend the expiration date of the coupon.
29	M	A man came to service desk with a piece of cheese he believed had a different price than the cash register charged.	The price tag in front of the product shows the correct price.	The price on price tag and the cash register differed from each other. The cash registered a higher price. The service employee took time and investigated the issue. It turned out the price tag was for a different product. The product turned out not to be a discount product, but the product next to it. The service employee took time to investigate the issue, making an <i>effort</i> for the customer. The service employee decided that the wrong card was not the customer's fault and with some <i>flexibility</i> , decided to refund the customer the difference in price between the cash register and the price tag.
30	F	A customer wanted to buy very specific products, which were located in the special needs food section. These products include gluten free products, low-salt products and low-sugar products. It turned out the products she wanted to buy were past their expiration date.	Under no circumstances is it allowed to sell products that are past their expiration date.	The customer desperately wanted to buy these products because she could not do without it. The service employee was rather hesitant and the service employee explained that it would not be allowed because it is against the rules. The employee steered <i>politeness</i> . The customer did not accept the answer of the service employee and insisted that even though the products were past their expiration date, she still wanted to buy them. The service employee gave in, because the customer became more upset. The service employee repaired the breach by steering on <i>need</i> and thanks to allowing <i>process control</i> , the customer was allowed to buy the products.