

[Home](#) > [Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science](#) > [Article](#)

Exploring consumer conflict management in service encounters

Original Empirical Research | Published: 23 July 2009

Volume 38, pages 617–633, (2010) [Cite this article](#)



[Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science](#)

[Aims and scope](#) →

[Submit manuscript](#) →

[Michael B. Beverland](#) ¹, [Steven M. Kates](#)², [Adam Lindgreen](#)³ & [Emily Chung](#)¹

 3274 Accesses  59 Citations [Explore all metrics](#) →

Abstract

Consumer researchers have yet to examine how consumers frame and deal with conflict. Understanding how consumers manage conflict is essential for service providers seeking to effectively recover instances of service failure, and avoid the costs associated with increasing instances of consumer anger. Using a modified grounded theory approach, we develop a model of consumer conflict management drawing on 39 informant accounts of service failures. The emergent model proposes that consumers' conflict style is related to whether conflict is framed in task or personal terms. Task-framed conflicts resulted in more productive conflict styles than those framed in personal terms. Self vs. other orientation moderated the relationship between conflict frame and conflict style. These findings help us better understand the nature of consumer conflict and identify the importance of carefully targeting service recovery efforts to reduce instances of anger.



This is a preview of subscription content, [log in via an institution](#) to check access.

Access this article

[Log in via an institution](#) →

[Buy article PDF 39,95 €](#)

Price includes VAT (Poland)

Instant access to the full article PDF.

Rent this article via [DeepDyve](#)

[Institutional subscriptions](#) →

Similar content being viewed by others



Customer Responses to Service Failure in Direct and Indirect Harm Context: An Abstract

Chapter | © 2017



Examining Process and Moderating Effects of Customer-Created Guilt in a Service Context: An Abstract

Chapter | © 2018



Understanding Why Customers Choose to Abuse or Not to Abuse, Return Policies: The Customer'S Return is N...

Chapter | © 2017

Explore related subjects

Discover the latest articles, news and stories from top researchers in related subjects.

[Artificial Intelligence](#)

Notes

1. To facilitate articulation of unconscious meanings and motivations, simple projective techniques were employed; informants were shown pictures from magazines including depictions of people, nature scenes, and products. Pictures included that of an eye, people having coffee, two women kickboxing, and approximately thirty others. Probes were based on informants' own accounts and concepts from the literature (e.g., disconfirmation, forgiveness, and switching).

References

Aaker, J., Fournier, S., & Brasel, A. S. (2004). When good brands do bad. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(1), 1-16.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Adair, W. L., Okumura, T., & Brett, J. M. (2001). Negotiation behavior when cultures collide: the United States and Japan. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 371-385.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Andreassen, T. W. (2001). From disgust to delight: do customers hold a grudge? *Journal of Service Research*, 4(1), 39-49.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Ariely, D. (2007). The customer's revenge. *Harvard Business Review*, 85, 31-42.

[Google Scholar](#)

Barclay, D. W. (1991). Interdepartmental conflict in organizational buying: the impact of the organizational context. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 28(2), 145-159.

Bechwati, N. N., & Morrin, M. (2003). Outraged consumers: getting even at the expense of getting a good deal. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 13*(4), 440-453.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Bolton, R. N., Smith, A. K., & Wagner, J. (2003). Striking the right balance: designing service to enhance business-to-business relationships. *Journal of Service Research, 5*(4), 271-293.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Bonifield, C., & Cole, C. (2007). Affective responses to service failure: anger, regret, and retaliatory versus conciliatory responses. *Marketing Letters, 18*, 85-99.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Bougie, R., Pieters, R., & Zeelenberg, M. (2003). Angry customers don't come back, they get back: the experience and behavioral implications of anger and dissatisfaction in services. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 31*(4), 377-393.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Boyd, H. C., III, & Helms, J. E. (2005). Consumer entitlement: theory and measurement. *Psychology and Marketing, 22*(3), 271-286.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Fischer, E., & Otnes, C. C. (2006). Breaking new ground: Developing grounded theories in marketing and consumer behavior. In W. Russell (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing* (pp. 19-30). Belk Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Flint, D. J., Woodruff, R. B., & Gardial, S. F. (2002). Exploring the phenomenon of customers' desired value change in a business-to-business context. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(4), 102-117.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24, 343-373.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Friedman, R. A., Tidd, S. T., Currall, S. C., & Tsai, J. C. (2000). What goes around comes around: the impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(1), 32-55.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Grandey, A. A., Dickter, D. N., & Sin, H.-P. (2004). The customer is *not* always right: customer aggression and emotion regulation of service employees. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 397-418.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Grandey, A. A., Kern, J. H., & Frone, M. R. (2007). Verbal abuse from outsiders versus insiders: comparing frequency, impact on emotional exhaustion, and the role of emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(1), 63-79.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Grégoire, Y., & Fisher, R. (2006). The effects of relationship quality on customer retaliation. *Marketing Letters*, 17, 31-46.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Grégoire, Y., & Fisher, R. J. (2008). Customer betrayal and retaliation: when your best customers become your worst enemies. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(3), 247-261.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Grégoire, Y., Tripp, T. M., & Legoux, R. (2009). When customer love turns into lasting hate: the effects of relationship strength and time on customer revenge and avoidance. *Journal of Marketing* forthcoming.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

[Book](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Hess, R. L., Jr., Ganesan, S., & Morrin, M. (2003). Service failure and recovery: the impact of relationship factors on customer satisfaction. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(2), 127-145.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

Koza, K. L., & Dant, R. P. (2007). Effects of relationship climate, control mechanism, and communications on conflict resolution behavior and performance outcomes. *Journal of Retailing*, 83(3), 279-296.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Macintosh, G., & Stevens, C. (2006). Consumer conflict management strategies in everyday service encounters. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33, 279-280.

[Google Scholar](#)

Maxham, J. G., III, & Netemeyer, R. G. (2002). Longitudinal study of complaining customers' evaluations of multiple service failures and recovery effort. *Journal of Marketing*, 66, 57-71.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

McColl-Kennedy, J. R., & Sparks, B. A. (2003). Application of fairness theory to service failures and service recovery. *Journal of Service Research*, 5(3), 251-266.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

McCracken, G. (1986). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

[Google Scholar](#)

McGregor, J. (2008). Consumer vigilantes; memo to corporate america: hell hath no fury like a customer scorned. *Business Week* March 3rd: 38-58.

[Google Scholar](#)

Nyer, P. U. (1997). A study of the relationships between cognitive appraisals and consumption emotions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(4), 296-204.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Pinkley, R. L. (1990). Dimensions of conflict frame: disputant interpretations of conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(2), 117-126.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Pinkley, R. L., & Northcraft, G. B. (1994). Conflict frames of reference: implications for dispute processes and outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(1), 193-205.

Posthuma, R. A., White, G. O., III, Dworkin, J. B., Yáñez, O., & Swift, M. S. (2006). Conflict resolution styles between co-workers in US and Mexican cultures. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 17(3), 242-260.

Purohit, Y. S., & Simmers, C. A. (2006). Power distance and uncertainty avoidance: a cross-national examination of their impact on conflict management modes. *Journal of International Business Research*, 5(1), 1-19.

Rahim, M. A. (1986). *Managing conflicts in organizations*. New York: Praeger.

Schneider, B., & Bowen, D. E. (1999). Understanding customer delight and outrage. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 41, 35-45.

Singh, J. (1990). Voice, exit, and negative word-of-mouth behaviors: an investigation across three service categories. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 18(1), 1-15.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Tax, S. S., Brown, S. W., & Chandrashekar, M. (1998). Customer evaluations of

service complaint experiences: implications for relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 62(2), 60–76.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Ward, J. C., & Ostrom, A. L. (2006). Complaining to the masses: the role of protest framing in customer-created complaint web sites. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33, 220–230.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Weiner, B. (1973). *Theories of motivation*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

[Google Scholar](#)

Zaltman, G. (2004). *How customers think*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

[Google Scholar](#)

Zourrig, H., Chebat, J.-C., & Toffoli, R. (2009). Consumer revenge behavior: a cross-cultural perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(10), 995–1001.

[Article](#) [Google Scholar](#)

Acknowledgments

The authors thank David Bednall, Liliana Bove, Francis Farrelly, Yany Grégoire, Sandra Luxton, the four anonymous reviewers and the editor David Stewart for feedback on an earlier draft. Steven Kates would like to acknowledge the generous funding from the Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada.

Author information

Authors and Affiliations

**School of Economics, Finance & Marketing, RMIT University, GPO
Box 2476V, Melbourne, Vic, 3001, Australia**

Michael B. Beverland & Emily Chung

**Department of Marketing, Simon Fraser University, FBA, 8888 University
Drive, Burnaby, BC, Canada, V5A 1S6**

Steven M. Kates

Hull University Business School, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX, UK

Adam Lindgreen

Corresponding author

Correspondence to [Michael B. Beverland](#).

Rights and permissions

[Reprints and permissions](#)

About this article

Cite this article

Beverland, M.B., Kates, S.M., Lindgreen, A. *et al.* Exploring consumer conflict management in service encounters. *J. of the Acad. Mark. Sci.* **38**, 617–633 (2010). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-009-0162-0>

Received

27 May 2008

Issue Date

October 2010

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-009-0162-0>

Accepted

10 July 2009

Published

23 July 2009

Keywords

[Consumer conflict styles](#)

[Service recovery](#)

[Brand relationships](#)

[Grounded theory](#)

Search

Search by keyword or author



Navigation

Find a journal

Publish with us

Track your research