

Relating Individual's Acceptability And Service Failure

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Academic research on service failure is continuously evolving. This includes literature on service failure categories, core service failure, failure types, causes of failure, responses to failure and consequences following having service failures. Although much has been said regarding service failure, there is neither a clear, concise definition nor concrete empirical evidence found on what actually constitutes service failure. Service failure is generally accepted as a socially constructed concept, due to the variability and inseparability nature of services, service failure might mean different thing to different people. Based on previous literature, among the most cited theme for service failure is "delivery which does not meet or falls below customers' expectations" (Bell and Zemke, 1987; Andreassen, 2001; Sparks, 2001; Lovelock and Wright, 2002; Holloway and Beatty, 2003). This implies that customers have a predetermined expectation before consuming a service. However, this general definition does not take into account or express in more detail on the "how", "when" and "at what stage" the service delivery falls below the expectation and failure actually starts. This paper also forwards the acceptability theory whereby it is depicted that the acceptability of service failure is solely depending on the individuals' tolerance. One failure can be a severe failure to one individual while it might just be insignificant to another. This conceptual paper attempts to understand the nature of service failure and how it is currently perceived based on varying perspectives. The purpose of this paper is to generate some propositions to help to understand better how individuals' perceive service failure based on individuals' acceptability, which will then hope to lead to a novel definition of service failure.

Field of research: Service operations management