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The effects of customer service on consumer complaining behavior

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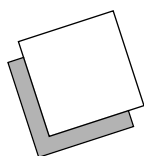
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# The effects of customer service on consumer complaining behavior

Jeffrey G. Blodgett, Kirk L. Wakefield and James H. Barnes

A key factor that influences consumers' choice of retailers, and other service providers, is customer service. For example, many people choose to shop at certain stores, do their banking at a particular financial institution, stay at a specific hotel, eat at certain restaurants, or take their clothes to a particular dry cleaner, etc., based on the level of customer service provided by that establishment. This aspect of customer service encompasses such factors as the level of responsiveness, friendliness, reliability, and promptness of employees (Kerin *et al.*, 1992; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1988). Another key aspect of customer service that affects consumers' choices of retailers and service providers is the manner in which the seller responds to customer complaints (Goodwin and Ross, 1990). Many times consumers make their choices based not only on the level of service provided at the time of sale, but also on their perception of the level of customer service they can expect to receive *after* the sale, should a problem arise. For example, many new car buyers choose to buy from a particular dealership because of its reputation for prompt, reliable, and courteous service. Likewise, many consumers shop at certain retail stores because they know that if they encounter any problems with a product the retailer will exchange the product or refund their money, with no questions asked. This aspect of customer service is critical to the long-term profitability of a firm. Firms that develop a reputation for consistently remedying customer complaints are more likely to develop customer loyalty and, over time, may increase their market share. Conversely, firms that develop a reputation for not being willing to remedy their customers' complaints may slowly lose many of their customers (see Blodgett *et al.*, 1993).

## Consequences of consumer dissatisfaction

Retailers and service providers should encourage customers who are dissatisfied to seek redress (i.e. ask for a refund, exchange, or repair) so that they will then have a chance to remedy those problems and retain those customers' business. Retailers and service providers need to understand that some dissatisfied customers will not give the seller a chance to remedy the problem, either because they feel that the seller will not be willing to remedy the problem, or because they are reluctant to complain in general. Rather than seek redress, many of these dissatisfied consumers will instead exit (i.e. vow never to shop there again) and engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior (i.e. tell others about their dissatisfaction). The end result for the retailer or service provider is lost sales and profits. Considering that it costs five times as much to attract a new customer as it does to retain a current customer (Desatnick, 1988), retailers and service providers should strive to create an atmosphere that encourages dissatisfied consumers to seek redress. At the same time, dissatisfied consumers who seek redress expect to receive a fair settlement and to be treated with courtesy and respect. Consumers who receive such treatment, and perceive that justice has been done, are more likely to repatronize the seller and may even engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior, thus spreading goodwill for the seller. However, complainants who perceive a lack of justice are unlikely to repatronize the

### Comprehensive modeling of process stages

seller and may attempt to “get even” (Folkes, 1984) by engaging in negative word-of-mouth behavior, warning others not to shop there.

The purpose of this article is to present a dynamic model of the consumer complaining behavior process. We first attempt to determine why some dissatisfied consumers seek redress while others do not approach the seller with their complaint. We also attempt to determine why some dissatisfied customers immediately engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior while others give the seller a chance to remedy the problem before telling their friends and relatives about their dissatisfaction. We then turn our attention solely on those dissatisfied customers who sought redress and focus on their subsequent, “post-complaint” behavior. In doing so we attempt to explain why some complainants subsequently engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior and repatronize the seller, while other complainants engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior and vow never to shop there again. Based on these findings, we provide insight to how sellers’ customer service policies and procedures affect the complaining behavior process. In Appendix 1, data from this study are used to calculate the opportunity cost (in terms of sales and profits) of losing a regular customer through dissatisfaction.

A major contribution of this study is that it presents a comprehensive overview of the complaining behavior process. Other studies have focussed on specific factors affecting complaint behavior (e.g. Halstead *et al.*, 1993), or the outcome of a specific type of complaint (e.g. Clark *et al.*, 1992), have limited their investigation to a specific phase of the complaining behavior process (Blodgett *et al.*, 1993;), or have omitted key variables (Singh, 1990). This study complements and builds on the work of these and other authors by modeling the different stages of the complaining behavior process.

This research is important for retailers and other service providers. By understanding the underlying factors driving the complaining behavior process, retailers and service providers may be able to develop more effective complaint handling policies and procedures, and might better understand how to train their employees to satisfy dissatisfied customers consistently. Dissatisfied customers who are pleased with the outcome of the redress episode might become even more loyal customers, thus helping retailers and service providers to increase their sales and profits.

#### **The complaining behavior process**

Complaining behavior is actually a dynamic process, as shown in Figure 1. On experiencing dissatisfaction, consumers can respond in a variety of ways. Depending on the perceived likelihood of success, one’s attitude toward complaining, and the level of importance attached to the product (or service), dissatisfied customers choose whether or not to seek redress. In order to get even, dissatisfied consumers who decide not to seek redress may instead engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior, and may vow never to repatronize the seller (i.e. exit). Dissatisfied consumers who decide to seek redress, on the other hand, are more willing to give the seller a chance to remedy the problem before telling others about their dissatisfaction. Subsequent word-of-mouth and repatronage behavior is then dependent primarily on the seller’s response to the customer’s complaint. Complainants who feel that they received a fair settlement (distributive justice), and who feel that they were treated with courtesy and respect (interactional justice),

## Negative word-of-mouth behavior

## Retailers with a reputation for guaranteeing satisfaction

are more likely to repatronize the seller and might even engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior. Conversely, complainants who feel that they did not receive a fair settlement, or who were treated rudely, may subsequently engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior, and exit. Likewise, complainants who believe that the problem was *controllable* or is *stable* are less likely to repatronize the seller and may warn others not to shop there.

### Construct definitions and hypotheses

#### Dependent variables

This study is unique in that a distinction is made between the negative word-of-mouth behavior that occurs prior to the redress-seeking episode (or in lieu of redress), and that which occurs afterward. It is important to make this distinction because these two different types of negative word-of-mouth are dependent on different factors. In making this distinction we will refer herein to the former as “pre-redress” and the latter as “post-redress” negative word-of-mouth. This study is unique also in that it includes positive word-of-mouth as a subsequent, post-complaint, response; previous studies have failed to recognize explicitly that one possible result of the complaint episode is positive word-of-mouth behavior. With these distinctions in mind, the five dependent variables investigated in this study are: redress-seeking behavior; pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior; post-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior; repatronage intentions; and positive word-of-mouth behavior (see Figure 1).

#### Independent variables

**Likelihood of success.** Likelihood of success refers to consumers’ perceptions of the seller’s willingness to offer a refund or an exchange (or other remedy) when a problem occurs (Richins, 1983; Singh, 1990). Some retailers (or service providers) willingly offer refunds or exchanges and therefore have a reputation for guaranteeing satisfaction, while others are perceived as being unresponsive to consumer complaints or follow very narrow and strict policies that limit consumers’ redress rights. Based on previous research, it is hypothesized that:

**H1a:** Dissatisfied consumers who perceive a high likelihood of success will be more likely to seek redress than are those dissatisfied consumers who perceive that the seller will not be willing to remedy the problem.

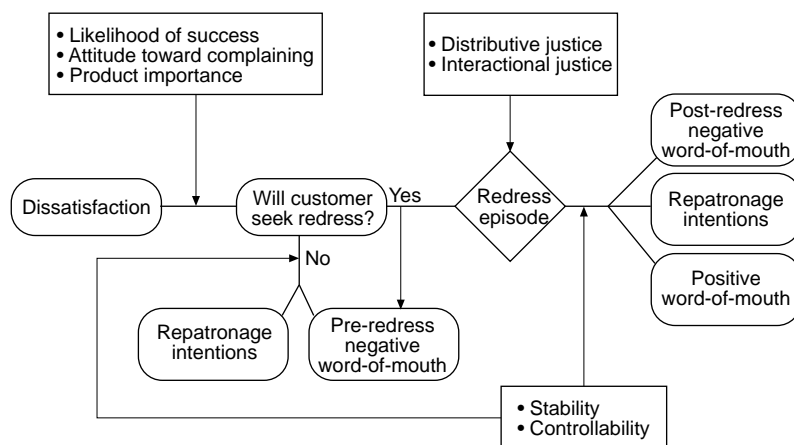


Figure 1. The complaining behavior process

## Motives for complaining

*H1b:* Consumers who perceive that the seller will not be willing to remedy the problem will be more likely to engage in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior.

*Attitude toward complaining.* Attitude toward complaining refers to an individual's disposition to seek redress when dissatisfied with a product or service (Bearden and Mason, 1984; Richins, 1987). Some people are assertive and seek redress whenever they are dissatisfied with a product or service, while other people are reluctant to complain no matter how dissatisfied they might be. Based on previous research, it is hypothesized that:

*H2a:* Consumers who have a positive attitude toward complaining will be more likely to seek redress.

However, a more interesting issue is whether it is a person's attitude toward complaining or his/her perception as to the likelihood of success that is the major determinant as to whether he/she seeks redress. If it is found that one's attitude toward complaining is the major factor, that would imply that no matter what retailers or service providers do to encourage dissatisfied customers to complain, some dissatisfied customers just will not seek redress (and instead will engage in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth, and exit). On the other hand, if it is found that likelihood of success is the major factor, that would imply that courteous and respectful complaint-handling procedures might entice those dissatisfied customers, who would otherwise exit, to seek redress.

Dissatisfied consumers who have a positive attitude toward complaining should also be more apt to give the seller a chance to remedy the problem before telling others about their dissatisfaction. Therefore, we also hypothesize that:

*H2b:* Consumers who have a positive attitude toward complaining will be less likely to engage in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior.

## The relative worth of products

*Product importance.* Product importance refers to the relative "worth" an individual places on a product or service (Bloch and Richins, 1983). Some products (or services) are considered to be more important either because they are relatively expensive, because the consumer relies more heavily (i.e. functionally) on that product, or because the customer derives greater enjoyment from using that product. Based on previous research, the following hypotheses are presented:

*H3a:* Dissatisfied consumers are more apt to take the time and effort to seek redress when they consider the product to be important.

*H3b:* Consumers who are dissatisfied with an important product will be more likely to engage in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior (i.e. due to higher levels of stress or anxiety).

If these two hypotheses are confirmed, these findings would imply that sellers of less expensive, staple items may be able to pay less attention to the customer complaint aspect of customer service compared with sellers of more expensive shopping goods (and vice versa).

*Distributive and interactional justice.* Once a dissatisfied customer seeks redress, two factors that determine their subsequent behavior are whether the customer feels that the remedy offered was fair and appropriate (distributive justice), and whether the customer was treated with courtesy and respect

## Attribution theory

(interactional justice) (Goodwin and Ross, 1990). Complainants who do not feel that the remedy offered was adequate, or who were treated rudely, are more likely to engage in post-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior, and are less likely to repatronize the seller. Conversely, complainants who feel that they were offered a fair settlement, and who were treated with courtesy and respect, may subsequently engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior and become more loyal customers. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- H4a:* Complainants who perceive a lack of distributive and/or interactional justice will be more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior.
- H4b:* Complainants who perceive a lack of distributive and/or interactional justice will be less likely to repatronize the seller (and vice versa).
- H4c:* Complainants who perceive that justice has been done (both distributive and interactional) will be more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior.

*Stability and controllability.* Based on attribution theory, Folkes (1984) states that dissatisfied customers will ask themselves whether the problem is stable and whether it was controllable. Stability refers to the likelihood that similar problems will occur in the future, while controllability refers to whether the customer believes that the problem could have been prevented. Consumers who feel that the problem is stable will want to avoid that seller in the future, and might also warn their friends to avoid that seller. Customers who feel that the problem was controllable, and could have been prevented, are likely to be somewhat angry at the retailer. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

- H5a:* Customers who believe that the problem is stable are more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior (both pre-redress and post-redress) and are less likely to repatronize the seller.
- H5b:* Customers who believe that the problem was controllable are more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth behavior (both pre-redress and post-redress) and are less likely to repatronize the seller.

## Self-report questionnaire

### Research methodology and findings

Data were collected via a self-report questionnaire administered to staff members at a large urban university in the midwest. Respondents were solicited via campus mail, and were given a new US\$2 bill in return for their participation. Respondents were asked to report on the most recent situation (within the past 12 months) in which they were dissatisfied with a product purchased at a retail store. Complaints centered on a wide variety of products, including clothing, shoes, children's toys, cameras, jewelry, answering machines, and small household appliances, etc. These products were purchased at a wide variety of retail stores, including traditional department stores, discount stores, superstores, and specialty stores, etc. Retailing has been described as a blend of goods and services (Pride and Ferrell, 1995); therefore, these findings should be generalizable to a wide range of situations in which services are a part of the overall offering.

### Descriptive statistics

The data came from a quota sample of 200 respondents; 100 from dissatisfied customers who did not seek redress (i.e. non-complainants), and 100 from dissatisfied consumers who did seek redress (i.e. complainants). Of the 200 respondents, 90% were female and 10% were male. Eighty-seven percent were Caucasian, 10% were African-American, and 3% were Asian-

### Pre-redress and post-redress responses

American. Approximately 13% were between the ages of 18-24, 33% were in the 25-34 age group, 34% were 35-44, 19% were 45-64, and 1% were age 65 or older. Twenty-seven percent reported that their highest educational level was high school graduate, 43% had attended some college, 21% were college graduates, while 9% had attended graduate school. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents reported household income between \$20,000-\$34,999, 15% had household income in the \$35,000-\$44,999 range, 20% reported income between \$45,000-\$64,999, and 6% reported household income over \$65,000. Eighty-four per cent were clerical workers, 10% worked in professional jobs, and 6% worked in white-collar jobs. Eighty percent of the respondents bought the product for themselves, while 20% purchased the product as a gift.

Respondents who did not seek redress were much more likely to have engaged in "pre-redress" negative word-of-mouth than were those respondents who eventually sought redress: our figures show that 77% of all non-complainers engaged in negative word-of-mouth, while only 48% of complainants engaged in negative word-of-mouth prior to seeking redress. Respondents who engaged in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth told, on average, 4.63 people about their dissatisfaction. Complainants who engaged in post-redress negative word-of-mouth told an average of 5.2 people about their dissatisfying experience, while those complainants who subsequently engaged in positive word-of-mouth told an average of 3.89 people about their satisfying experience.

### Research findings

Hypotheses *H1a*, *H1b*, *H2a*, and *H2b* were all confirmed: dissatisfied consumers who perceived a high likelihood of success, and who had positive attitudes toward complaining, were more likely to have sought redress and were less likely to have engaged in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth.

Conversely, those respondents who perceived a lower likelihood of success, or who had less favorable attitudes toward seeking redress, were less likely to have sought redress and were more likely to have engaged in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior. Interestingly, further analysis revealed that the major factor as to whether a dissatisfied consumer sought redress was the likelihood of success, indicating that even those dissatisfied consumers who do not like to complain are more likely to do so if they believe that the retailer will remedy the problem. Surprisingly, hypotheses *3a* and *3b* were not confirmed: contrary to expectations, product importance had no effect on whether or not a dissatisfied customer sought redress or engaged in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior (see Appendix 2).

### Lack of distributive or interactional justice

As hypothesized (*H4a*, *H4b*, and *H4c*), complainants who perceived a lack of distributive or interactional justice were much more likely to have engaged in post-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior, and are less likely to repatronize the seller. Conversely, complainants who perceived that justice had been done (both distributive and interactional) were much more likely to have engaged in positive word-of-mouth behavior (thus spreading goodwill for the seller) and are more likely to repatronize the seller. Hypotheses *5a* and *5b* were also confirmed: complainants who perceived the problem to be stable or to have been controllable were more likely to have engaged in negative word-of-mouth behavior (both pre-redress and post-redress) and are less likely to repatronize the seller (see Appendix 2).

### Perceptions of successful outcomes

### A finding of importance to sellers

#### Managerial implications and recommendations

The purpose of this article has been to present a dynamic model of the complaining behavior process, and, in doing so, to illustrate the pervasive influence of customer service throughout this process. Most of the factors that affect complaining behavior (i.e. the likelihood of success, whether or not customers perceive the problem to be stable or to have been controllable, and whether complainants perceive that justice was done) are influenced in one way or another by the level of customer service provided by the seller, and thus are to a large extent controllable by the seller. In this section we will discuss our research findings and comment on how retailers and other service providers can use this information the better to provide the level of customer service that will satisfy dissatisfied customers.

First of all, we found that the major factor that determines whether a person seeks redress is the perceived likelihood of success, and that even consumers who would otherwise exit are more likely to seek redress if it is clear that the seller is willing to remedy the problem. This finding illustrates just how important it is for sellers to create an atmosphere that encourages dissatisfied consumers to seek redress. Retailers and other service providers can implicitly and explicitly create such an environment. For example, implicit factors, such as the degree of helpfulness, friendliness, promptness, and competence of a firm's employees, will influence customers' perceptions of the retailer's willingness to remedy problems when they arise. More explicit factors, such as a warranty (Halstead *et al.*, 1993) or an expressly stated guarantee of satisfaction (e.g. "satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back!"), will have a strong, positive influence on one's perception as to the likelihood of successful redress. Other policies, such as "No refund after 30 days, or without a receipt", or "exchanges only", send a signal to customers that the seller will not always be willing to remedy complaints. Statements from employees, such as "if you ever have any problems with this product, just let us know and we'll take care of it", let customers know that the seller appreciates their business and is willing to stand behind his/her products and services. Post-purchase phone calls and letters of appreciation (when possible) also give customers an added assurance that the seller is concerned about their business. Most of these steps cost sellers very little (in both time and money), and have a very positive influence on consumers' perceptions as to the likelihood of success. Retailers and other service providers cannot remedy customers' complaints unless the customer first seeks redress; therefore, sellers must implicitly and explicitly communicate that customer satisfaction is guaranteed.

Another important finding is that dissatisfied customers who perceive little likelihood of success, or who have less favorable attitudes toward complaining, are more likely to engage in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth behavior. This finding should be of particular interest to sellers, because it demonstrates that dissatisfied customers who are reluctant to seek redress are more likely to "get even" by telling others about their dissatisfaction. Consumers who are exposed to negative word-of-mouth may form unfavorable impressions of the seller and may, in turn, decide to avoid the offending seller. Retailers and service providers may unknowingly be losing business because of negative comments made by dissatisfied customers. Therefore, retailers and service providers should consciously take steps to ensure that their customers perceive a high likelihood of success, because dissatisfied customers who do so are more willing to give the seller



### Importance and cost of product are irrelevant

a chance to remedy the situation before telling others about their dissatisfaction.

Another interesting finding is that product importance had no effect on redress-seeking behavior or on pre-redress negative word-of-mouth. This finding is somewhat contrary to previous research, and implies that complaining behavior is relatively consistent across all kinds of products and settings, and that sellers of even basic, less expensive goods (and services) need to be just as concerned with customer service as do sellers of more expensive, durable products. Small, specialty retailers and local service providers (e.g. banks, dry cleaners, fast food outlets, pizza deliveries, etc.) should therefore understand the impact that their complaint-handling policies and procedures can have on the long-term profitability of their businesses. Too many times small business owners focus on the immediate out-of-pocket cost of a refund or exchange, and do not take into consideration the long-term benefit (in terms of sales and profits) and goodwill that generated through positive word-of-mouth (see Appendix 1 for an illustration of the cost-benefit of remedying a customer complaint).

### Distribution and interactional justice

As expected, we also found that two major factors that determine whether the complainant will repatronize the seller (or exit), and whether that person will engage in positive word-of-mouth and spread goodwill or engage in negative word-of-mouth and spread ill will, are distributive and interactional justice. Interestingly, of the two variables, interactional justice had the larger impact. This finding implies that dissatisfied customers expect not only to receive a fair settlement but, more importantly, they also to be expect treated with courtesy and respect. Complainants who receive a fair settlement, but who are treated rudely, most likely will vow never to shop there again, and are likely to tell their friends and relatives about their negative experience. Therefore, firms should explicitly train their employees how to interact with dissatisfied customers. Employees should understand that some complainants will have experienced a great deal of stress and anxiety over the situation and therefore may be somewhat irritable. Employees should be taught to respond in a very reassuring and empathetic manner, and to give the customer an opportunity to explain the problem. Previous research (Greenberg and Folger, 1983) indicates that customers will be more satisfied with the outcome if they are allowed to provide input, especially in those situations in which the consumer has been using the product for an extended period of time, and therefore is not sure whether the retailer will stand behind the product. It is also important to note that a "fair settlement" does not necessarily imply a full refund or exchange. Prior research indicates that in these types of situations complainants may be satisfied with a partial refund or exchange, if they are given a chance to explain the circumstances and are treated with courtesy and respect (Goodwin and Ross, 1990).

### Stability and controllability

Two other critical factors that determine whether complainants will repatronize the seller and engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior, or whether they will exit and warn their friends not to shop there, are stability and controllability. In order to convince complainants that the problem is not likely to happen again, it is important to empathize with customers and offer a sincere apology (Bies and Shapiro, 1987). Employees should be trained to thank customers for bringing the problem to the seller's attention (i.e. so that the seller can take steps to correct the problem), and should tell customers how much their business is appreciated. Complainants who perceive that the

### Overcoming potentially adverse effects

seller is genuinely concerned about their business, is competent and committed to satisfaction, are more likely to perceive that the problem neither is stable nor was controllable. As a result, they will be more likely to repatronize the seller and spread goodwill among other potential customers (i.e. by engaging in positive word-of-mouth).

Finally, this study points to a basic difference between pre-redress and post-redress negative word-of-mouth. Whereas pre-redress negative word-of-mouth is due primarily to the likelihood of success, post-redress negative word-of-mouth is due primarily to a lack of justice. The potentially adverse effects of pre-redress negative word-of-mouth oftentimes can eventually be overcome; however, the adverse effects of post-redress negative word-of-mouth are damaging. Complainants who engage in pre-redress word-of-mouth might be persuaded by friends or relatives to ask for a refund or an exchange. Those dissatisfied customers who then receive justice may subsequently engage in positive-word-of-mouth behavior and tell their friends "the rest of the story", thus creating goodwill for the seller. Post-redress negative word-of-mouth, on the other hand, is much more severe and may possibly influence other consumers to "boycott" the seller.

In summary, retailers and other service providers can view the complaining behavior process as an opportunity to solidify and strengthen their relationships with their customers. Sellers can implement complaint-handling policies and procedures that are designed to maximize customer satisfaction, and can train their employees to implement these policies and procedures effectively. Retailers and other service providers can take steps to assure customers that they will always stand behind their products (or services), and will always respond to any complaints with courtesy and respect. As shown in Appendix 1, the pay-off gained from retaining a dissatisfied customer is many times greater than the cost of remedying the complaint.

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## Appendix 1

### *The opportunity cost of losing a customer*

In this section data from this study are used to calculate the opportunity cost of losing an average, regular customer due to dissatisfaction. In the survey respondents were asked how much the product cost, and to estimate how much they spent at that retailer over the past six-month period. The data indicate that the average retail price of the various products was US\$62.65 (SD = US\$119), and that respondents had spent, on average, approximately US\$250 at that particular retail store in the past six months (for an average of US\$500 per year). Assuming an average gross margin of 33% (recognizing that some retailers maintain a higher gross margin, while others operate on a smaller margin), the typical product cost the retailer US\$41.98 while generating US\$20.67 in gross margin. Based on these figures, when a complainant was granted an exchange the retailer incurred out-of-pocket expenses of US\$21.30 (the cost of the new item, US\$41.98, minus the US\$20.67 gross margin from the original item; i.e. assuming that the retailer cannot charge the cost of the item back to the vendor). Assuming that the complainant was satisfied with the retailer's response and remains a loyal customer, this US\$20.67 "investment" generates an expected return of US\$165 in the first year alone (US\$500 yearly purchases multiplied by the 33% gross margin). Conversely, if the retailer refused to exchange the product, or treated the customer rudely, and the complainant vowed never to shop there again, the retailer would lose out on the US\$165 gross margin over the next year – and each of the following years that the customer may have patronized the retailer. Although the exact opportunity cost is going to vary among different types of retailer and service provider, this example clearly illustrates that it is in the seller's best interest to encourage dissatisfied consumers to complain, and to adopt policies and procedures that guarantee customer satisfaction (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987).

## Appendix 2

### *Measures*

Multiple-item scales were developed for each of the independent variables (as per Churchill, 1979). Items were developed based on a literature review and on interviews with consumers and store managers. These items were all measured on seven-point scales. Attitude toward complaining was based on a scale by Richins (1983), while product importance was based on a scale by Richins and Bloch (1983). Likelihood of success was measured by asking consumers about their impression of the retailer when their dissatisfaction initially occurred. Based on interviews with consumers, we developed multiple items to measure stability and controllability, and distributive and interactional justice. We also developed several items to measure the varying degrees of repatronage intention (some customers said they would definitely shop there again, some said they would still shop there but less often, while some

said they would never shop there again). All of these scales were fairly reliable, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.78-0.95. The other dependent variables (redress-seeking behavior, pre-redress and post-redress negative word-of-mouth, and positive word-of-mouth) were all measured as dichotomous variables (i.e. yes/no).

### Analysis

In order to test our hypotheses, separate analyses were performed on each dependent variable. Since most of the dependent variables were dichotomous, we relied mostly on discriminant analyses. To test the effect of the independent variables on repatronage intentions, multiple regression was used (i.e. since repatronage intention was measured as a continuous variable). The results of these tests are presented in Tables AI-AVI.

	Canonical correlation
Likelihood of success	0.84
Attitude toward complaining	0.63
Product importance	NS
<i>Notes:</i>	
<i>N</i> = 200, 100 sought redress, 100 did not seek redress	
78% correctly classified	
$\chi^2 = 95.16, p = 0.000$	

*Table AI. Redress-seeking behavior discriminant analysis*

	Canonical correlation
Likelihood of success	0.87
Attitude toward complaining	0.73
Product importance	NS
Stability	NS
Controllability	NS
<i>Notes:</i>	
<i>N</i> = 200, 125 engaged in pre-redress negative word-of-mouth, 75 did not	
65% correctly classified	
$\chi^2 = 12.12, p = 0.002$	

*Table AII. "Pre-redress" negative word-of-mouth: discriminant analysis*

	Canonical correlation
Distributive justice	0.96
Interactional justice	0.76
Stability	-0.40
Controllability	-0.24
<i>Notes:</i>	
<i>N</i> = 100, 30 engaged in post-redress negative word-of-mouth, 70 did not	
78% correctly classified	
$\chi^2 = 36.21, p = 0.000$	

*Table AIII. "Post-redress" negative word-of-mouth: discriminant analysis*

	Canonical correlation
Distributive justice	0.95
Interactional justice	0.76
Stability	-0.43
Controllability	-0.20

*Notes:*

$N = 100$ , 37 engaged in positive word-of-mouth, 63 did not

79% correctly classified

$\chi^2 = 35.15$ ,  $p = 0.000$

*Table AIV. Post-redress positive word-of-mouth: discriminant analysis*

	Standardized coefficient
Stability	-0.18
Controllability	-0.14
Likelihood of success	NS
Attitude toward complaining	NS
Product importance	NS

*Note:*

$R^2 = 30.35\%$

*Table AV. Repatronage intentions: non-complainers; multiple regression*

	Standardized coefficient
Interactional justice	0.44
Distributive justice	0.26
Stability	-0.18
Controllability	-0.14

*Note:*

$R^2 = 33.02\%$

*Table AVI. Repatronage intentions: complainers; multiple regression*

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