

Perceived Justice in Service Recovery: Exploring Its Impact on Customer Repurchase Intentions

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Abstract

In today's competitive market, service recovery has become a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to restore customer satisfaction and foster long-term loyalty. Recognizing the importance of fairness perceptions in this process, the present study examines how different dimensions of justice influence repurchase intentions in the online context. Drawing on justice theory and consumer behaviour literature, a research model was developed and tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) with data collected from 509 respondents. The results reveal that perceived justice in service recovery positively affects customers repurchase intentions. Among the three dimensions, procedural justice exerts the strongest influence, followed by interactional justice and distributive justice. These findings underscore the distinct role each justice dimension plays in shaping customer responses after service recovery. Practical implications are offered for e-commerce companies aiming to strengthen customer retention and loyalty.

Keywords: Justice Theory, Service Failure, Service Recovery, Repurchase Intentions, E-Retailing

Introduction

Despite continuous efforts to ensure high standards of service quality, even companies associated with outstanding service delivery are not immune to occasional service failures. Service failures are generally defined as “any service-related mishaps or problems that occur during a consumer’s experience with the firm” (Maxham III, 2001). Such failures can be very disastrous, because, in most cases, they result in customer dissatisfaction, and subsequent customer defection (Ding et al., 2015). Interestingly, many consumers initially assume such failures are short-lived and will be resolved quickly (Holloway & Beatty, 2003; Forbes et al., 2005). This anticipation offers a critical timeframe within which companies can employ effective service recovery strategies, to reduce the adverse effects of service failure, and rebuilt customer satisfaction (McCullough et al., 2000). Thus, when handled effectively, service recovery efforts can transform dissatisfied customers into loyal ones (Kelley et al., 1993; Boshoff, 1997).

Considering this, service recovery can be viewed as a strategic tool for customer retention and loyalty building. One of the core concepts in service recovery literature, commonly referred to as perceived justice, reflects customer’s perceptions of fairness (Yeh et al., 2025). More precisely, this construct represents customer’s subjective evaluation of the suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness of recovery strategies, undertaken by the service provider following service failure (Tax et al., 1998). The sense of justice experienced by the customer is shaped by what they personally regard as a fair and suitable response to the failure, rather than by any objective standard. In this way, perceived justice emerges not merely from the resolution itself but from how well the recovery aligns with the customer's expectations of fairness (Zhu et al., 2021). Research has consistently shown that consumers’ sense of justice, formed in response to the service provider’s recovery efforts, plays a pivotal role in shaping their subsequent attitudes, behaviours, and intentions (Nikbin et al., 2012; Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2008). Considering its influence, it becomes essential to

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examine the core dimensions of perceived justice that underpin customers' evaluations of fairness. In service failure and recovery literature, perceived justice is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct composed of three core dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Tax et al., 1998; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002; DeWitt et al., 2008). Understanding these justice dimensions is essential for developing recovery strategies that not only mitigate dissatisfaction but also foster positive customer relationships and loyalty.

While the role of perceived justice has been widely acknowledged in the service failure and recovery literature (Tax et al., 1998; Schoefer & Ennew, 2005; Choi&Choi, 2014), much of the existing research has predominantly focused on immediate post-recovery outcomes such as satisfaction or complaint handling effectiveness, often neglecting how customers' perceptions of justice translate into future behavioural intentions, such as the willingness to repurchase or maintain a relationship with the service provider (Ali et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2009). Additionally, prior studies have reported mixed findings regarding the relative effects of different justice dimensions, i.e., distributive, procedural, and interactional on post-recovery satisfaction and behaviour (Jung & Seock, 2017). This creates a critical theoretical and empirical gap, especially across online service contexts, where customer experiences little to no human contact (Yeh et al., 2025). Addressing this gap is essential not only for advancing academic understanding but also for enabling online service providers to develop recovery strategies that go beyond mere damage control and actively foster customer retention through fair and meaningful recovery experiences.

Objectives of the study

In view of the increasing importance of justice perceptions in shaping customers repurchase intentions, the current study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- To assess the impact of perceived justice of service recovery on repurchase intentions.
- To examine the influence of various dimensions of perceived justice of service recovery on repurchase intentions.

Theoretical Background

Perceived Justice of service recovery

The concept of perceived justice of service recovery has emerged as a critical lens through which scholars examine customer evaluations of fairness in response to service failures. Grounded in Adams's (1965) equity theory, which underscores the cognitive assessment of input-output ratios in social exchanges, this framework has been extensively applied to understand how consumers determine fairness during service recovery processes (McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003). Customers assess the adequacy of recovery efforts by comparing their own investments, including time, effort, and emotional distress, with the compensation or redress offered. When this exchange is perceived as inequitable, customers tend to develop a feeling of injustice, which can either lead to complaint behaviour or switching intentions (Weun et al., 1997; Migacz et al., 2018).

Based on the justice framework, customers tend to assess whether their complaints are addressed fairly or not depending on distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Ampong et al., 2021). Distributive justice pertains to the perceived fairness of the outcome or compensation received, while procedural justice involves the fairness of the processes and policies adopted to address complaints (Bahri-Ammari & Bilgihan, 2017). Interactional justice, on the other hand, reflects the quality of interpersonal treatment and the way information is communicated during the recovery process (Blodgett et al., 1997; Nadiri & Tanova, 2016). Notably, even when the outcome and procedures are satisfactory, a lack of respect or empathy in communication can lead to perceptions of injustice (Bahri-Ammari & Bilgihan, 2017).

Repurchase Intentions

Repurchase intention has emerged as a key construct in understanding consumer behaviour, particularly in online retailing. It refers to the customer's self-reported likelihood of engaging in future purchase behavior with a service provider (Seiders et al., 2005). In the context of online

shopping, repurchase intention reflects “the subjective possibility that a consumer will continue purchasing products from the same online store in the future” (Chiu et al., 2009).

The concept of repurchase intention has its theoretical roots in social psychology and marketing (Upamannyu et al., 2015). Social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and the investment model of commitment (Rusbult, 1980) describe repurchase intention as a decision to maintain a relationship, commonly referred to as relationship maintenance. Within this framework, a customer’s intention to repurchase becomes a vital defensive marketing strategy that significantly influences business success (Cronin et al., 2000). Thus, instead of focusing solely on offensive marketing strategies that aim to acquire new customers and expand market share (Fornell, 1992), many service providers now prioritize retaining customers and encouraging repeat purchase behaviour.

The importance of repurchase intention lies in its direct impact on a firm’s long-term profitability and sustainability. For instance, multiple studies (Chou & Hsu, 2016; Kumar & Kashyap, 2022; Mazhar et al., 2022) emphasized that retaining existing customers is considerably more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. This is because loyal customers tend to remain with the same platform, thereby ensuring consistent revenue and contributing to brand growth in a highly competitive digital environment (Conversational, 2024). Thus, understanding the antecedents of repurchase intention is essential not only for strengthening customer loyalty but also for achieving a sustainable competitive edge in today’s online marketplace.

Hypotheses Development

The justice theory has received much attention from academia as a theoretical framework for service recovery research (Ha & Jang, 2009; Smith et al., 1999; Tax et al., 1998). Based on the justice theory, this section posits a set of research hypotheses regarding the main effects of perceived justice of service recovery and its components (i.e. distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice) on repurchase intention within the context of online retailing.

Perceived Justice of Service Recovery and Repurchase Intentions

By the late 1990s, marketing scholars began examining service recovery through the lens of justice theory in social psychology, highlighting perceived justice—or fairness—as a pivotal factor shaping customer evaluations (Smith et al., 1999; Tax et al., 1998; Clemmer & Schneider, 1996; Mattila & Cranage, 2005). Justice theory has been applied to restore customers’ sense of fairness following a service failure, while simultaneously enhancing the relationship between customers and service providers (Ali et al., 2023; Kuo et al., 2025). Building on this, empirical evidence suggests that customers’ justice perceptions play a critical role in shaping their post-recovery responses, including satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchase intentions (Lin et al., 2011; Wei et al., 2020). In essence, perceived fairness during service recovery acts as a powerful determinant of whether a service failure becomes an opportunity to rebuild the customer relationship or results in customer defection (Zhu et al., 2021).

A significant body of research has investigated the relationship between perceived justice and consumers’ behavioural intentions. For example, Gilly (1987) observed that when customers are satisfied with the way their complaints are dealt with, dissatisfaction can be reduced and the probability of repurchase (revisit) may be enhanced. This was further supported by McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, (2003) who maintained that customers’ satisfaction levels and their future post-purchase intentions are dependent upon their perception of fair treatment; that is, whether they believe justice has been served or not. Along similar lines, Ok et al., (2005) asserted that the way service failure is managed affects customer’s behavioural intentions including word of mouth and repurchase intent. Consequently, the fairer customers feel the recovery actions are, the higher repatronage intentions will be. Thus, in line with above research studies, we hypothesize:

H1: Perceived justice of service recovery positively influences repurchase intentions.

Distributive Justice and Repurchase Intentions

Distributive justice refers to customers' perception of fairness in the tangible outcomes they receive following a service failure, such as refunds, discounts, product replacements, or other forms of compensation (Blodgett et al., 1997; Tax et al., 1998). It is a critical component of service recovery, particularly in online retailing context where customers expect quick and equitable redress (Lin et al., 2011). When these expectations are met through fair and adequate recovery efforts, they not only diminish customers' desire for retaliation but also significantly reduce the likelihood of negative word-of-mouth (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Kuo & Wu, 2012). Consistent with these findings, several studies confirm that when distributive justice is perceived to be high, customers are more likely to repurchase and maintain their relationship with the firm (Blodgett et al., 1997; Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2008). Therefore, this study posits that after service failure, perceived distributive justice plays a decisive role in shaping satisfaction and emotional responses, which in turn positively influence repurchase intentions. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1a: Distributive justice positively influences repurchase intention.

Procedural Justice and Repurchase Intention

Procedural justice focuses on the fairness and transparency of the process used to resolve service failures, including elements such as timeliness, consistency, accessibility, and flexibility of the recovery effort (Tax et al., 1998). Procedural justice may be achieved through efficient complaint-handling systems, prompt responses, and customer-centric policies that empower frontline employees to act swiftly and effectively (McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003; Hart et al., 1990). Prior studies have consistently underscored the importance of procedural justice in shaping customer satisfaction following a service failure (Goodwin & Ross, 1992; del Río-Lanza et al., 2009). A fair and efficient resolution process not only reassures customers that their concerns are taken seriously but also fosters a sense of respect and dignity, which is crucial in rebuilding the customer-firm relationship (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005). Furthermore, higher perceptions of procedural justice have been linked to reduced negative word-of-mouth and greater willingness to repurchase (Ha & Jang, 2009; Blodgett et al., 1997). Therefore, this study posits that in the context of online service recovery, high perceptions of procedural fairness results in increased re-patronage intentions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1b: Procedural justice positively influences repurchase intention.

Interactional Justice and Repurchase Intention

Interactional justice pertains to the perceived fairness in the interpersonal treatment that customers experience during the service recovery process, including respectful communication, empathy, and sincerity in addressing customer complaints (Choi & Choi, 2014). Lind and Tyler (1988) emphasized that courteous and respectful interactions foster perceptions of fairness, which in turn influence customer satisfaction and future behaviours. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that the quality of interpersonal communication during recovery significantly impacts customer satisfaction and post-recovery behaviour (Goodwin & Ross, 1992; McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003). For instance, when customers perceive a lack of empathy from frontline employees, their emotional response tends to be more negative, thereby reducing their intention to repurchase (McColl-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003). In contrast, expressions of concern and personalized attention reinforce emotional connections with the brand (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Homburg & Fürst, 2005). Similarly, Río-Lanza et al. (2009) found that interactional justice positively impacts overall satisfaction with the recovery experience, while others (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997; Clemmer & Schneider, 1996) suggested that favourable perceptions of interactional justice reduce negative word-of-mouth and enhance repatronage intentions. Based on the aforementioned literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1c: Interactional justice positively influences repurchase intention.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research methodology with a descriptive design to explore the variables under investigation. A structured questionnaire was employed to gather data from respondents who had experienced service failures and subsequent recovery efforts from the online retailer within the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. The research follows a cross-sectional approach, capturing respondent perceptions at a single point to assess relationships among the key constructs.

Questionnaire Design

The measurement instrument (questionnaire) for the study was divided into three parts. Part 1 focused on perceived justice of service recovery. Part 2nd contains items on repurchase intention, and part 3rd deals with the respondents' demographic profile that included gender, age, educational level, occupation and family income. For perceived justice of service recovery, the study adopted scales from the works of Wang et al., (2011) & Xu et al., (2014). To measure repurchase intentions, the study adapted the scales from the studies of Roggeveen et al., (2012), Tsai & Huang (2007) and Wang et al., (2016). All measurement items used in the current research were validated to ensure their reliability and validity. All survey items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree).

Data

The sample size of 385 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula (1963), which is appropriate for large populations and provides a reliable estimate, particularly when the population proportion is unknown. However, to enhance the robustness of the study, the questionnaire was distributed to 560 individuals, out of which 509 usable responses were retained for analysis.

Data were collected over a five-month period (February 2023 to June 2023) using a self-administered, face-to-face survey method to ensure a high response rate. For the present study, we used a non-probability sampling technique called quota sampling to choose participants from five districts (two from Jammu and three from Kashmir divisions) based on population density to ensure better representation of the target population.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile

The sample of 509 respondents was almost evenly distributed between male (42.6%) and female (57.4%). In terms of age, the study found that most respondents were young, with 53.6 percent aged 18-24, 31% aged 25-31, and only 12.6% and 2.8% in the 32-39 and 40+ age groups, respectively. In terms of educational qualifications, the highest proportion held a bachelor's degree (49.5%), followed by those with a master's degree or above (31.4%). Respondents with a 10+2 qualification made up 19.1% of the sample. As far as the occupation is concerned, many respondents were unemployed (67.6%), while 10.8% were self-employed. A total of 14.1% of the remaining individuals were employed in the private sector, while 7.5% were employed by the government. In conclusion, 48.5% of respondents reported a monthly income below Rs 30,000, 30.1% earned between Rs 31,000 and Rs 60,000, 12.8% had an income ranging from Rs 61,000 to Rs 90,000, and 8.6% received more than Rs 90,000.

Measurement Model Assessment (Lower-Order Level)

The measurement model was assessed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs used in the study (Hair et al., 2017). All indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong relationships between items and their corresponding constructs. Convergent validity was further confirmed through the average variance extracted (AVE), with all constructs showing AVE values above the minimum acceptable level of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (See Figure 1). Internal consistency reliability was also supported as both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values were above the standard threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating that the items consistently measured their respective constructs (See Table 1).

Constructs	Item Codes	Indicator Loadings	Alpha Coefficient	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Distributive Justice (DJ)	DJ1	0.882	0.880	0.917	0.735
	DJ2	0.878			
	DJ3	0.836			
	DJ4	0.832			
Interactional Justice (IJ)	IJ1	0.791	0.851	0.893	0.627
	IJ2	0.665			
	IJ3	0.804			
	IJ4	0.854			
	IJ5	0.831			
Procedural Justice (PJ)	PJ1	0.714	0.898	0.919	0.586
	PJ2	0.818			
	PJ3	0.800			
	PJ4	0.789			
	PJ5	0.705			
	PJ6	0.753			
	PJ7	0.708			
	PJ8	0.827			
Repurchase Intentions (RI)	RI1	0.853	0.885	0.916	0.686
	RI2	0.838			
	RI3	0.807			
	RI4	0.795			
	RI5	0.847			

Table 1: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Source: Authors' own work

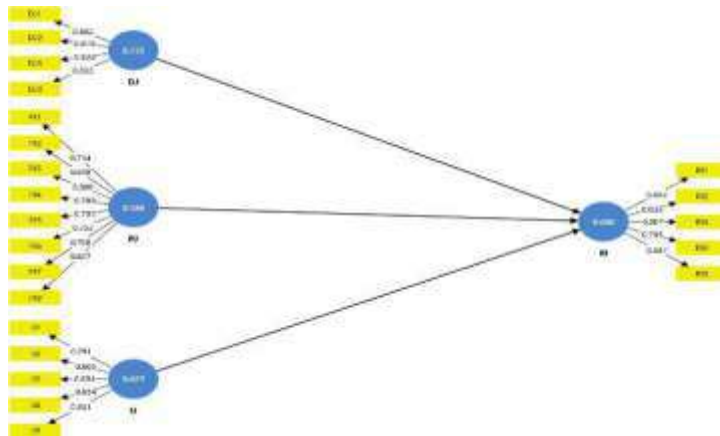


Figure 1: Measurement Model at lower-order level reflecting Factor loadings and AVE.

Source: Authors' own work

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The Fornell–Larcker criterion demonstrated that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with all other constructs, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. Similarly, the HTMT values were below the threshold of 0.90 recommended by Hair et al. (2017), further confirming that the constructs are empirically distinct. The detailed results of these assessments are reported in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

	DJ	IJ	PJ	RI
DJ	0.857			
IJ	0.725	0.792		
PJ	0.755	0.749	0.766	
RI	0.564	0.571	0.588	0.828

Table 2: Fornell and Larcker Criterion

Note: DJ: Distributive justice; IJ: Interactional Justice; PJ: Procedural Justice; RI: Repurchase Intentions. Source: Authors' own work

	DJ	IJ	PJ	RI
DJ				
IJ	0.822			
PJ	0.845	0.84		
RI	0.638	0.645	0.655	

Table 3: HTMT

Note: **DJ**: Distributive justice; **IJ**: Interactional Justice; **PJ**: Procedural Justice; **RI**: Repurchase Intentions. Source: Authors' own work

Measurement Model Assessment (Higher-Order Level):

In the current study, perceived justice of service recovery is modelled as a higher-order construct consisting of three lower-order dimensions: Distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Accordingly, disjoint two-stage approach was used to validate the formative higher-order construct of perceived justice, following the guidelines of Hair et al., (2017). The validation of



formative construct was carried out by first assessing collinearity issues using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, followed by evaluating the significance and relevance of formative indicators through their outer weights. As presented in Table 4, the VIF values are below the threshold of 3, and the outer weights for all indicators are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ (Figure 2). Thus, the validity of higher-order construct is confirmed. Figure 2: Measurement Model at higher-order level reflecting significance of outer weights. Source: Authors' own work

HOC	LOC's	Outer Weights	STD	T-Statistics	P-Values	VIF
Perceived Justice of Service Recovery	Distributive Justice	0.308	0.093	3.293	0.001	2.700
	Interactional Justice	0.358	0.090	3.971	0.000	2.627
	Procedural Justice	0.431	0.095	4.542	0.000	2.918

Table 4: VIF values and Indicator Weights of Higher-order Formative Construct
Source: Authors' own work

Structural Model Assessment

The confirmation of validity and reliability permits an assessment of the structural path model. To test the proposed direct relationships in this research, the bootstrapping procedure (Shrout and Bolger, 2002) was conducted using SmartPLS 4 software. Furthermore, to evaluate the structural models' explanatory and predictive capabilities, key indicators such as, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2), were assessed in accordance with the guidelines provided by Hair et al., (2017).

The R^2 value for repurchase intentions (0.398) exceeds the recommended minimum threshold of 0.25, indicating a satisfactory level of explanatory power. This implies that 39.8% of the variance in the repurchase intentions is explained by the perceived justice of service recovery, thereby supporting the adequacy and robustness of the structural model. Furthermore, the effect size (f^2) was assessed to determine the relative impact of exogenous variable on the endogenous construct. The effect size (0.662) indicates that omitting perceived justice would considerably reduce the explanatory power, i.e., R^2 value of the endogenous variable, repurchase intentions. Additionally, the Q^2 value for repurchase intentions (0.39) is greater than zero, indicating that the model possesses predictive relevance.

Relationship Between Perceived Justice of Service Recovery and Repurchase Intentions: Path Analysis

To examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in the structural model, path coefficients were assessed. These coefficients, which are equivalent to standardized beta values in ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, help determine both the direction and strength of hypothesized relationships (Hair et al., 2014; 2017). The significance of these path coefficients was evaluated using the bootstrapping technique, which provides t-values, p-values and bias-corrected confidence intervals to test the statistical significance of each path. In this study, bootstrapping was conducted with 5,000 resamples, as recommended by Hair et al. (2014), to ensure robust estimates of standard errors and significance levels for direct effects. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4, while the structural models is depicted in Figures 3 & 4.

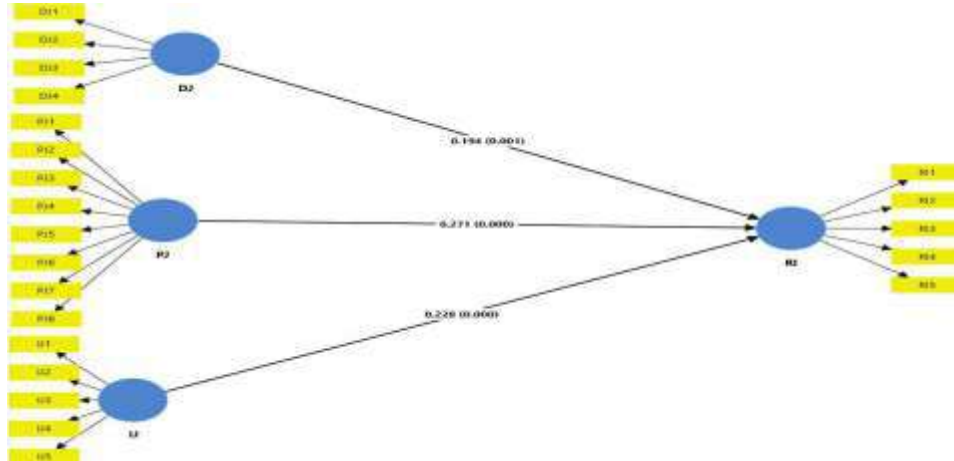


Figure 3: Structural Model (lower-order) reflecting path coefficients and p-values. Source: Authors' own work
 Figure 4: Structural model (Higher-order) reflecting path coefficients and p-values



Note: Jus: Perceived Justice of Service recovery; RI: Repurchase Intentions. Source: Authors' own work

Hypotheses	Beta	Std.	T statistics	P values	95% Bias corrected Confidence Intervals		Results
JUS-> RI	0.631	0.030	20.929	0.000***	0.563	0.684	Accepted
DJ -> RI	0.194	0.060	3.229	0.001***	0.077	0.312	Accepted
PJ -> RI	0.271	0.060	4.537	0.000***	0.150	0.381	Accepted
IJ -> RI	0.228	0.056	4.040	0.000***	0.113	0.337	Accepted

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Note: *** $p \leq 0.001$. Source: Authors' own work

In the structural models illustrated in Figures 3 & 4, all proposed hypotheses were empirically supported, with the corresponding path coefficients (β) demonstrating statistical significance at the 0.01 level. The detailed results for each hypothesis are discussed below:

H1: Perceived justice of service recovery positively influences repurchase intentions.

Consistent with hypothesis (H1), perceived justice of service recovery was found to have a significant and positive impact on repurchase intentions ($\beta = 0.631$, $t = 20.929$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI (0.563, 0.684); therefore, H1 is accepted.

H1a: Distributive justice positively influences repurchase intentions.

Bootstrapping results revealed a significant positive effect of distributive justice on repurchase intentions ($\beta = 0.194$, $t = 3.229$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI (0.077, 0.312)). Hence, *H1a* is supported.

H1b: Procedural justice positively influences repurchase intentions.

The results of the bootstrapping procedure indicated a significant positive relationship between procedural justice and repurchase intentions ($\beta = 0.271$, $t = 4.537$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI (0.150, 0.381)), supporting Hypothesis *H1b*.

H1c: Interactional justice positively influences repurchase intention.

As hypothesized (*H1c*), interactional justice has a significant and positive impact on repurchase intentions ($\beta = 0.228$, $t = 4.040$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI (0.113, 0.337)). Thus, Hypothesis *H1c* is also validated.

Discussion

This study contributes to the existing literature by proposing and empirically examining the impact of perceived justice of service recovery on customers repurchase intentions (*HI*). The proposed research model was examined using PLS-SEM, and the results revealed a significant effect of perceived justice of service recovery on customers' willingness to return, which aligns with the studies of Ha & Jang, (2009); Mody et al., (2020); Choi et al., (2023). This result highlights the importance of fairness perceptions in shaping post-recovery customer behaviour. When customers perceive that a service failure has been resolved in a fair and satisfactory manner, they are more likely to develop trust and loyalty toward the service provider, ultimately enhancing their likelihood of future engagement. This finding is theoretically grounded in the *reciprocity principle* from social psychology (Gouldner, 1960), which suggests that in service recovery situations, customers reciprocate fairness by exhibiting intentions to remain loyal to the firm.

In addition, the results show that all three dimensions of justice significantly and positively impact customers' willingness to repurchase. Procedural justice emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.271$, $p < 0.001$), followed by interactional justice ($\beta = 0.228$, $p < 0.001$), and distributive justice ($\beta = 0.194$, $p = 0.001$). With regards to *H1a*, the findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between distributive justice and repurchase intentions. This finding aligns with previous studies (Crisafulli & Singh, 2017; Ghalandari, 2013; and Lin et al., 2011), who also indicate that customers value fair outcomes like refunds, replacements, or discounts following a service failure. Such tangible compensations make customers feel that the situation has been addressed fairly, particularly when dissatisfaction levels are high. However, the comparatively smaller impact of distributive justice can be attributed to the increased standardization of refund and return policies on e-commerce websites. As a result, compensation is increasingly seen as a basic requirement rather than something that differentiates one platform from another.

In relation to *H1b*, the results show that procedural justice positively impacts customers repurchase intentions, which aligns with previous studies (Teo & Lim, 2001; Karatepe, 2006). This implies that customers are more inclined to make repeat purchases with the same e-retailer when complaint handling procedures are clear and equitable, returns and refunds can be initiated easily, and problems are resolved in a reasonable time. Among the three dimensions, procedural justice is relatively more effective than distributive justice and interactional justice, which highlights the importance of consistent and fair recovery process in shaping long-term customer relationships.

Finally, with regards to *H1c*, findings suggest a moderately significant effect of interactional justice on repurchase intentions. This is in line with Maxham III & Netemeyer (2003) and Matikiti et al. (2018), who reported that the interpersonal treatment customer receive during the service recovery process is a major determinant of their patronage intentions. Although service recovery in e-commerce is mostly in the digital form, customers are still in need of respectful, responding and empathetic conversations, via. chat, email, or a phone call. Although procedural justice is the most significant predictor in this study, interactional justice also has a significant impact and can be used to distinguish e-commerce platforms based on the customer experience.

Managerial Implications

The findings highlight important implications for e-retailers aiming to strengthen customer relationships through effective service recovery. Distributive justice remains essential—fair outcomes such as refunds, replacements, and discounts are necessary—but they are most effective when combined with broader recovery efforts, including apologies and clear explanations that convey accountability and concern. Procedural justice, the strongest predictor of relationship intentions, requires transparent, efficient, and user-friendly systems, supported by real-time complaint monitoring, clear resolution timelines, and organized feedback mechanisms to build trust. Interactional justice also matters in digital contexts, as customers expect respectful, empathetic, and responsive communication. Frontline staff and AI agents must therefore respond professionally and with empathy, especially when handling criticism. Overall, successful service recovery in e-commerce depends not only on fair outcomes but also on transparent processes and respectful communication. When consistently applied, these practices can transform service failures into opportunities for loyalty and long-term engagement.

Limitations and Future research directions

While this study provides valuable evidence on the role of perceived justice in shaping repurchase intentions, several avenues remain for future research. First, the focus here was on direct effects; future work could examine whether justice perceptions vary across personality traits, cultural contexts, and industries. Second, incorporating mediators such as satisfaction, trust, and commitment may clarify how fairness perceptions translate into customer outcomes (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011). Third, given the cross-sectional design, causal conclusions are limited; longitudinal studies would better capture changes in justice perceptions over time and their impact on long-term behaviors. Finally, as this study examined only repurchase intentions, future research should include behavioral indicators—such as repeat purchases, referrals, and positive word-of-mouth—to provide a more comprehensive view of service recovery's consequences.

Conclusion

Customer retention is vital for long-term success, particularly in online retail where service failures are more common due to the absence of face-to-face interaction. This study underscores the importance of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice in shaping customers' post-purchase intentions following service recovery. While fair outcomes such as compensation remain valued, customers respond more strongly to the fairness of recovery processes and the quality of communication. The findings suggest that service recovery is most effective when e-retailers adopt a holistic approach that integrates fair compensation with transparent procedures and respectful interactions.

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