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경영학 석사 학위논문

Frustration Mitigation through Other's Explanation  
: The Crucial Mitigating Role of Other Consumer's  
Explanation on Frustration After Service Failure

서비스 실패 후 타 고객의 설명이  
좌절에 미치는 영향  
'의심'의 조절효과를 중심으로

2017년 2월

서울대학교 대학원  
경영학과 마케팅전공  
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이 논문을 경영학 석사학위논문으로 제출함

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## ABSTRACT

### Frustration Mitigation through Other's Explanation : The Crucial Mitigating Role of Other Consumer's Explanation on Frustration After Service Failure

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This research is the first to examine the crucial mitigating role of other consumer's explanation, which should be categorized as CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior), on the frustration. Specifically, the consumer's explanation is regarded as retrospective (explaining why the service failure has happened and why the firm could not avoid it) which corresponds to the anger and frustration (retrospective emotion). In general, current article goes over the impact of other consumer's explanation on the target consumer's revisit intention which is mediated serially through frustration and complaining intention. In addition, this study finds out the moderating impact of doubt about the future service (before receiving other consumer's explanation) in explaining the effect of other consumer's explanation on the frustration under the online service failure circumstances. Gelbrich states that the retrospective explanation of employees will reduce anger but not frustration because frustrated customers do not blame the organization (2009).

Hence, current research model has its basis on the Gelbrich's research framework which states that retrospective explanation reduces retrospective emotions and prospective explanation reduces prospective emotions and coping response (complaining

and nWOM) will occur accordingly. However current research predicts that when the explanation is done by other consumers instead of the employees, it will reduce frustration based on the following findings: 1) sharing emotional similarity buffers negative emotions (Townsend et al 2013), 2) frustration is just a milder version of anger (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones 2004) and according to the 3) Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT). Mitigating impact of other consumer's explanation about the service failure on target consumer's negative emotion is completely unrevealed area until now. Also, this article explains the moderating impact of doubtfulness after the service failure between the other consumer's explanation and the target consumer's anger and frustration based on the affective asymmetry and negativity bias theory. Finally, the author states that the other consumer's explanation and the revisit is serially mediated by frustration and complaining intention. Hypotheses are tested and confirmed via SPSS by conducting the laboratory experiment under the online service failure (delivery of a wrong product in Kakaostory online shopping service) circumstance.

**Keywords:** CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior), other consumer's explanation, doubtfulness about future service, frustration, service failure, revisit intention, complaining intention

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background and Motivation

For most of the firms, every encounters and interactions with their customers are regarded as the “moment of truth.” This moment of truth not only occurs during the service transaction process but may also occur during when customer merely sees the company’s logo or when they hear about the brand from other customers (a bad or a good experience with the company). Thus in the service marketing literature, service failure and recovery encounters are considered as critical “moments of truth (MOT)” in the relationship between service provider and customers (Grönroos 1998). And specifically under the service failure circumstances, the target customer (who experienced the service failure) may encounter not only the employees but also other customers who have already experienced the typical service. Other customer may help the target customer or interrupt the target consumer which may possibly harm the organization. So in this case, other customer may have a crucial impact to the target consumer and this indeed could be regarded as critical moment of truth.

Online service failure is inevitable. Thus the service recovery process cannot be emphasized enough. Service recovery refers to the actions by service firms in response to a service failure (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). It is a crucial part of online business nowadays because the successful recovery may lead to better perceived image of the firm and it may achieve or restore customer satisfaction (Lovelock et al 2002). Previous research has shown that a successful service recovery can have a positive effect on consumer attitudes as well as behavioral intentions like repurchase intentions and the spread of positive WOM (Blodgett et al., 1997). Nevertheless, for many of the online

service organizations, providing a successful service recovery remains a challenging process (Grewal et al., 2004).

According to Namasivayam, in service industries nowadays, consumers are regarded as a “transient employee (2003).” And being a partial employee, consumers perform extra role which are not required to the successful service outcome (Groth 2005). This phenomenon is called customer citizenship behavior (CCB). A typical example of CCB would be recommending a service business to one’s family and friends or writing a customer feedback form are not generally required for the successful completion of a service transaction, yet these behaviors are regarded as of value to the organization (Groth 2005).

And prior research has examined a significant impact of this CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior) and CDB (Customer Dysfunctional Behavior) on the customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in mediation of customer’s service quality recognition (Gong and Yi, 2005).

After the service failure, consumers experience various emotions. Following a seminal article by Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer (1999), emotion is defined as ‘mental state[s] of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or one’s own thoughts’. And in the moments of truth under the service failure circumstances, consumers are thought to experience mostly the negative emotions. Also, consumer’s emotions after the service failure should not be overlooked and should be considered carefully since their negative emotions may be expressed as negative word-of-mouth or severe complaining which may be unhealthy to the firms.

Also, the previous research has found the crucial moderating role of helplessness explaining the coping responses to anger and frustration after the service failure (Gelbrich, 2009). Gelbrich introduces two kinds of explanation (retrospective and

prospective explanation) and two kinds of emotions derived from the service failure (retrospective emotion and prospective emotion). And he states that the employee's retrospective explanation mitigates the anger but not frustration (retrospective emotion) and the employee's prospective explanation reduces helplessness which is regarded as prospective emotion resulting from service failure.

Hence this research focuses on the retrospective explanation after the online service failure and the principal agent delivering the explanation is shifted from the company's employee to the other customer who has experienced the similar service failure beforehand. In other words, the point of view in terms of service recovery is changed from the employee's obligation to the other consumer's voluntary help. Thus, we say that this voluntary service recovery process done by other consumers who already experienced service failure could be categorized as a part of CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior). For convenience, we will regard "retrospective explanation from other consumers who have experienced the service failure" as "explanation from other consumers."

The author predicts that this explanation from other customers will mitigate the frustration, which is regarded as one of the retrospective emotions resulting from the service failure. And the moderating impact of doubtfulness about the future service which has occurred after the service failure (and before the explanation) is examined between the other consumer's explanation and the frustration throughout the study. Lastly, the author goes over the two mediating effects of frustration and complaining intention between the other consumer's explanation and the revisit intention.

## 1.2 Research Goal and Research Question

In general, when service failure occurs, the service recovery process is done by employees since it's their obligation to do so. What if this process is done by other consumers instead? Would this kind of CCB (retrospective explanation done by other consumers) reduce the consumer's negative emotion which has resulted from the service failure? And how would this explanation increase the consumer's revisit intention to the online website? What variables would act as a bridge between those two?

The main goal of current research is to examine whether there is mitigating impact of explanation by the other consumers to the frustration based on the following support from previous studies: (1) sharing emotional similarity buffers negative emotions (Townsend et al 2013), (2) frustration is a milder version of anger (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones 2004) so other consumer's retrospective explanation will reduce the anger and frustration like employee's retrospective explanation mitigating the anger which was confirmed in Gelbrich's (2010) article. And according to the (3) Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), since frustrated consumers blame the situation and were not expecting any help from the other consumer's the unexpected help from other consumers (CCB) will have significant mitigating impact on the frustration (compared to the explanation from the employees since consumers are expecting somewhat from the firm). Also, the author examines the impact of other consumer's explanation on the revisit intention by considering two mediators (frustration and complaining intention).

### 1.3 Thesis Outline

Following chapter discusses about the theoretical background supporting the author's hypotheses. The first part of the chapter 2 talks about the main path of the research model (Explanation→Frustration) and remaining parts explain the mediating path

(Explanation→Frustration→Complaining Intention→Revisit Intention) and the moderating role of doubt between the explanation and frustration. In chapter 3, the author conducts experiments to examine the proposed hypotheses. The last chapter covers the general conclusion, implication to the existing online firms and how future research should be done.

## **CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES**

### **2.1 Mitigating Role of Other Consumer's Explanation on Frustration**

Nowadays, not only employees but also customers being considered as crucial human resource to the service industries, many researches has been done regarding customer citizenship behavior (Yi and Gong 2005). Customer citizenship behavior (CCB) could be defined as being a partial employee to the company, which consumers perform extra role that are not required to the successful service outcome (Groth 2005). So, this voluntary extra-role behaviors that go beyond the expectations of customers within the specific service context is called CCB. It is called extra-role since consumers are performing the work which employees may otherwise perform.

According to the Yi's research about the impact of other customers on the CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior), he separates CCB into two different categories: (1) behavior toward the customer (e.g., helping other customers), and (2) behavior toward the firm (e.g., making constructive suggestions to improve the firm service) (Yi, Gong and Lee 2013). Current research will focus on the former part which in specific is voluntarily helping other consumers by explaining the service failure situation to them.

Under the service failure situation, the service recovery process is mostly done by the employees since it's their job to do so. The question is, if this process is done by other consumers instead, would this kind of CCB reduce the consumer's frustration?

Anger, which is considered as most dominant reaction to the service failure, is a retrospective emotion which occurs when people blame someone else for an aversive event (Roseman 1991). And frustration, like anger, can also be defined as a retrospective emotion, which tends to occur when people attribute a goal incongruent event to situational factors (Roseman 1991). Situational blame attribution means that people blame the situation for the specific event since they think it is uncontrollable. Service failures are often described as frustrating experiences (Laros and Steenkamp 2005) since they occur due to the events beyond anyone's control. Roseman distinguishes anger and frustration as distinct emotions because blaming someone else differs from blaming no particular person (1991). However, Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones (2004) argues that frustration is a milder form of anger. Current research model has its basis on the Gelbrich's theoretical model but consider frustration and anger as a same retrospective emotion (frustration as a milder form of anger). So that the explanation from other consumers will mitigate both emotions.

Bhattacharjee explains the process by how consumers reach repurchase intentions in an Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) framework in his article. He states that consumers form an initial expectation of a specific product or service prior to purchase at first and then they accept and use that product or service (Bhattacharjee 2001). And as consumers assess its perceived performance comparing with their original expectation and form a satisfaction level, satisfied consumers decide to repurchase, while dissatisfied users discontinue its subsequent use (Bhattacharjee 2001).

In other words, Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) demonstrates that the

consumers' expectation bounded with perceived performance will determine the customer satisfaction after the purchase (Oliver 1977). In accordance with this theory, since other consumer's explanation is considered as voluntary extra-role behaviors that go beyond the expectations of customers, this article predicts that the frustrated consumers after the service failure may blame the situation and would not expect any solution from the other consumers anyway (since they were in the same shoes). So this low expectation may lead to intensified (or perhaps unexpected) mitigating impact when the target consumers receives retrospective explanation from other consumer when compared to the employee's retrospective explanation (since consumers are expecting at least something from the employees as compared to the consumers).

As mentioned earlier, prior study has shown that the explanation about the past service failure (why the service failure has occurred and why they could not avoid it) which is done by employees decreases anger but not frustration (Gelbrich 2010). He also claims that the anger acts as a mediator between the retrospective explanation by employees and the confrontative complaining whereas frustration leads to support-seeking complaining (Gelbrich 2010). However, he states that the retrospective explanation will not reduce frustration because frustrated customers do not blame the organization (they don't blame the company or the people but their environment or situation). Hence, they may probably seek for sympathy and understanding from others to vent frustration.

It is known that perceiving greater threat in the situation (i.e. having to give a speech in front of many people) would be associated with greater stress, but interacting with someone who is emotionally similar would buffer individuals from this heightened stress (Townsend, Kim and Mesquita 2013).

This also could be applied to the current research that when other consumers explain the situation based on their similar past experience (why the situation happened

and that the company could not avoid it), the target customer may feel the comfort and their anxiety and frustration which resulted from the service failure would be relieved. However, this research is different in nature from the Townsend's study since it is not merely sharing their emotions but other consumers are speaking for the company (actually doing the service recovery process) instead of the employees about the service failure (performing CCB).

Gelbrich has conducted his study under the service failure situation and the principal agent whom explained about the situation was the company's employees (2009). In other words, he examined the customer-employee interaction in his study. In this article, the author examines this interaction in different domain (CCB) in which the person who does the explanation is other customers instead of employees. Thus, the author proposes that when retrospective explanation is done by consumers, it will have mitigating effect to the frustration (retrospective emotions).

**H1:** Under the online service failure circumstances, other customer's explanation will mitigate the frustration.

Thus, present research hypothesizes that the frustration, which is concerned as a retrospective emotion, will diminish when target consumers receive retrospective explanation from other consumers who have already experienced the service failure in the past. As mentioned earlier, this may be due to the ECT, frustration being a retrospective emotion, and due to them believing that since other consumers were in their shoes before so that they may understand them more deeply than the employees. More specifically, from the consumers' point of view, employees may not truly seem to

understand them and so the employees may be viewed as merely doing the explanation to them to minimize the service failing situation since it's their duty.

## 2.2 Moderating Role of Doubt about Future Service

Helplessness is considered as a prospective emotion which occurs when people perceive a low potential to cope with a goal incongruent event (Lazarus 1991). And as mentioned previously, Gelbrich has found the crucial moderating role of helplessness explaining the coping responses to anger and frustration after the service failure (2009).

On the similar line, current research examines the moderating role of 'doubt about future service' and categorized such emotion as a prospective emotion since people in this condition think that the company would make the same mistake again in the future.

From here, the author notes that the doubtfulness is not merely a trait but an emotion derived from service failure. More specifically, current research identifies this prospective emotion as when people believe that the company will probably make the same mistake again in the future and in which they will not trust the company in the next service transaction.

The term "doubt" is defined as a status between belief and disbelief, involves uncertainty or distrust or lack of sureness in terms of certain fact or a decision (Sharpe 2008). In other words, doubtfulness is the state in which the mind remains suspended between two contradictory propositions and unable to assent to either of them (Sharpe 2008). And according to the study about psychology of language and communications, doubtfulness seems to describe human condition which has existed from the beginning of *homo sapiens* (Puchalska-Wasył 2013). Thus, we could infer that doubt is a crucial

negative emotion or status which cannot be disregarded in this globalizing society since it is deeply embedded in human culture from the very beginning.

From the book 'Believing' by Michael McGuire, he explains due to the human's brain chemistry which includes neural system and serotonin, most established beliefs are difficult to change and even when these beliefs are proven to be false, people cannot easily throw away their beliefs (McGuire 2013). So, once consumers feel doubt after the service failure, it is not easy for them to change their negative feelings about the future service. And once that their doubt is proven to be true in the future (that the service failure will happen again), it would be more difficult to mitigate such emotion.

Specifically, negativity bias refers to the notion that, even when of equal intensity, things of a more negative nature have a greater effect on one's psychological state and processes compared to positive things. In other words, something negative will have much more impact on a person's behavior and cognition than something equally emotional but positive. Also, referring to the Foley's book "The age of absurdity," he emphasizes that one of the crucial findings in psychologic field is the emotional asymmetry which refers to the notion that the negative emotions are more powerful and persist much longer than the positive emotions (2010).

Thus, when combined, negativity bias and emotional asymmetry theory also supports the idea that the intensity of negative emotions one possesses after the service failure (from this article, doubt and frustration) will not alter easily even after the other consumer's explanation and will eventually lead to similar level of negative emotion (frustration).

**H2:** Doubt about the future service will have a moderating effect between the other consumer's explanation and the target consumer's frustration.

**H2a:** Mitigating impact of other consumer's explanation to frustration will be stronger (milder) for the consumers who feel low (high) level of doubt after the service failure.

The author predicts that when consumers who feel low doubt about the future service receive explanation from other consumers, their frustration level would likely to decrease more than consumers who felt high doubt about the future service after the service failure (their frustration level will be lower). On the other hand, when consumers who feel high doubt about the future service receive explanation from other customers, their frustration will not decrease that much (still be high) compared the consumers who possesses low doubt about future service.

Only a handful of research about consumer's doubtfulness about the firm's future service under the context of service failure has been done. And whether consumer's different intensity of doubt along with other consumer's retrospective explanation (CCB) has a different impact on the frustration (which is regarded as one of the retrospective emotion) seems to be a completely unrevealed area. Thus, this research sheds light on the grey area of consumers' level of frustration after the service failure under the situation whether one possesses a high or a low doubt about the future service after other consumer's explanation about the service failure.

### 2.3 Indirect Effect of Other Consumer's Explanation on the Revisit Intention

There has been a number of researches examining the relationship between consumers' emotions and corresponding responses under the service failure context. According to

the appraisal theorists, it is known that consumers often use different complaining strategies to cope with negative emotions derived from service failure (Lazarus 1991). In specific, customers who feel anger engages in vindictive negative word-of-mouth and vindictive complaining (Gregoire and Fisher 2008). And consumers who feel frustration fosters support-seeking negative word-of-mouth (Stephens and Gwinner) and problem-solving complaining (Gregoire and Fisher 2008).

Previous study has examined the crucial role of consumers' emotions in the context of service failure and service recovery (Smith and Bolton 2002). In specific, Smith and Bolton have investigated how customers' emotional responses from service failures influence the consumers' satisfaction level (2002).

Roseman categorized anger and frustration as retrospective emotions (1991). In specific, he stated that the anger tends to occur when people attribute a goal incongruent event (such as online service failure) to someone else (Roseman 1991). And the research shows that anger fosters confrontative coping such as vindictive negative word-of-mouth and vindictive complaining (Frijda 1987). On the other hand, since frustration does not involve external attribution like anger, Gelbrich concluded that it fosters support-seeking coping (support-seeking nWOM and support-seeking complaining to the employees).

As mentioned earlier, prior study has shown that the explanation about the past service failure (why the service failure has occurred and why they could not avoid it) which is done by employees decreases anger but not frustration (Gelbrich 2010). He also claims that the anger acts as a mediator between the retrospective explanation by employees and the confrontative complaining whereas frustration leads to support-seeking complaining (Gelbrich 2010). Current study extends the Gelbrich's findings by

examining the mediating role of anger and frustration between retrospective explanation done by other consumers and the complaining intention.

Previous research shows that the in-store crowding is mediated by negative emotion and will have negative impact to the repurchase intention and WOM intention (Ji and Lee 2005). Also, Yi and Gong stated that perceived service quality fully mediated the effects of CCB on repurchase intention (Yi and Gong 2005).

Based on the prior studies, current research predicts that other consumer's retrospective explanation will have influence on the revisit intention channeled serially through the frustration and complaining intention. In other words, current research predicts that other consumer's explanation will decrease the target consumer's frustration and in turn, the frustration will have positive impact to the complaining intention. Finally, consumers with low complaining intention will have higher revisit intention.

Until now, as far as we know, there is no prior research regarding CCB directly affecting consumer repurchase (revisit) intention (Yi and Gong 2005). However according to the prior study, CCB has indirect effect to the repurchase (revisit) intention mediated by service quality recognition (Yi and Gong 2005). Current study examines the effect of CCB (particularly the other consumer's explanation) on the target consumer's revisit intention mediated sequentially through frustration and complaining intention.

Oliver (1997) defined behavioral intentions (i.e., repurchase and word-of-mouth intentions) as "a stated likelihood to engage in a behavior" (p. 28). Revisit intention is a very crucial marketing tool especially for the online stores since merely revisiting the online site may lead the consumer to the actual purchase behavior. Potential consumers may not have planned to buy something at first but after revisiting the online store, they may actually purchase something they might not have planned in advance.

According to Gounaris (2010), a key issue for online service companies is a consumer's decision to return or not to an internet site. He concludes that online consumers are more likely to switch compared to the offline shoppers (Gounaris et al 2010). In specific, a customer keeps on using the online service category but switches from one service provider to another easily. Research regarding the e-context suggests that an internet consumer has a greater tendency to switch than does a non-internet shopper (Donthu and Garcia, 1999). He explains that this phenomenon is due to the fact that an internet consumer has unparalleled opportunities to compare products, services, and prices in this medium. Thus, a consumer's motivation to return to a particular site is determined by the consumer's interaction with the site (Smith and Sivakumar, 2002). The more negative the consumer feels about a particular site after an interaction, the less likely the consumer is to return to that site. However, the revisit intention should be distinguished from the purchase intention since the latter refers to the consumer's willingness to buy more through the internet.

Another CCB, which is known as the Consumer Complaining Behavior, should be studied carefully as well. According to the study by TARP, dissatisfied consumers talk about their negative experience to approximately 9 people in average and this results in 10% to 15% decrease in company's annual sales (1987). Also, consumers whom experienced service failure would likely to complain to the third parties (i.e. engage in negative WOM). Under the online service circumstances, word-of mouth is known as much more accentuated than in the physical setting, since according to Poleretsky (1999) unhappy customers tell their negative experiences to five friends, while on the Internet they tell to 5,000 people.

According to the prior study about revisiting intention and WOM intention under the food service industry, consumer's oral transmitting intention and revisit intention

were positively correlated (Lee, Park and Park 2003). Thus, one could infer from this study that the nWOM or complaining intention may have negative impact to the revisit intention or those two could be negatively correlated.

Also, prior research has shown the positive impact of complaining behavior to the repurchase intention. While one may logically think that noncomplainers would have higher repurchase intentions than complainers, the research has found out that consumers with high complaining intention who actually complained had even higher levels of repurchase intentions than noncomplainers when they were satisfied with how their complaints were resolved (Gilly 1987).

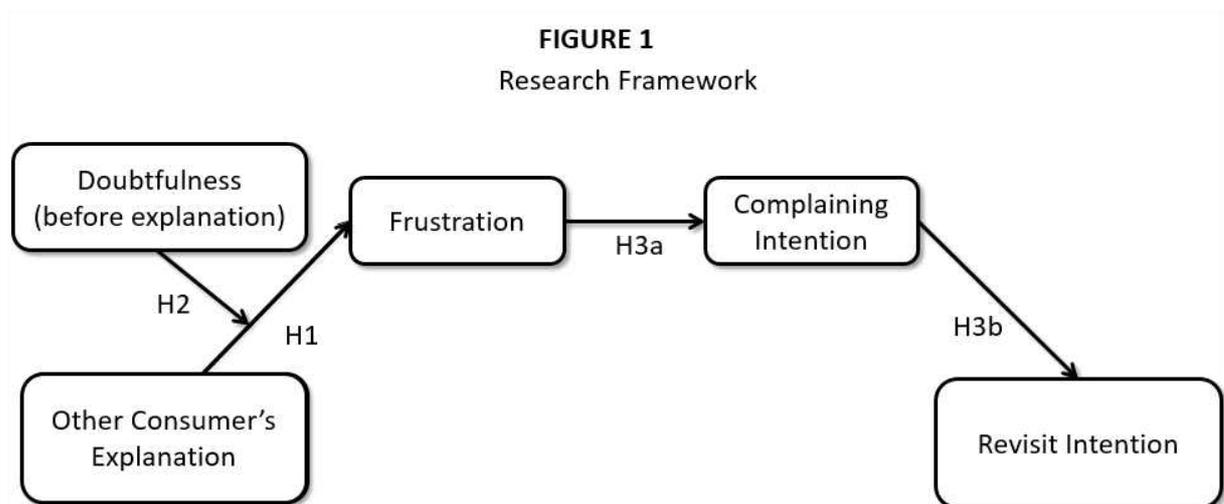
Considering the importance of complaining intention under the online service failure situation and that only the positive path from complaining intention (behavior) to the repurchase intention has been examined in prior studies, current research sheds light on the grey area by examining the impact of consumer's complaining intention to the revisit intention under the online service failure circumstances.

Hence, this research is meaningful in a way that compared to the previous study, when the path was tested from complaining intention instead of complaining behavior, the negative relationship was revealed. In other words, since prior hypothesis has examined the mediating role of frustration between other consumer's retrospective explanation and the revisit intention, the additional mediation path (complaining intention → revisit intention) could be added and could come up with following hypothesis.

**H3:** The effect of other consumer's explanation to the revisit intention would be mediated serially through frustration and complaining intention.

In sum, this article is the first to demonstrate the crucial mitigating role of CCB (in specific, other consumer’s explanation) on the target consumer’s revisit intention which is mediated serially through frustration and complaining intention. The author also states the moderating effect of consumer’s doubt about the future service in explaining the relationship between the other consumer’s retrospective explanation and target consumer’s feeling of frustration. Overall hypotheses mentioned above are tested in next section.

In study 1, the author employs a multistep mediation analysis and test the entire path of the suggested mechanism (as depicted in figure 1): other consumer’s explanation [X] will mitigate target consumer’s frustration [M1], which positively influences complaining intention [M2], and finally leads to negative impact to the revisit intention [Y]. Additionally in study 1, the author demonstrates moderation analysis and tests the moderating effect of doubtfulness about future service [W] which has occurred after the service failure circumstance. Following figure 1 demonstrates the overall research framework and proposed hypotheses of H1, H2, H3a and H3b.



## CHAPTER 3 EXPERIMENT

### 3.1 Study: Laboratory Experiment (Misdelivery)

The following laboratory study was conducted to test the overall hypotheses.

#### 3.1.1 Method and Procedure

In this study, two groups were given two different scenarios (explanation vs. no explanation) and was conducted as between-subjects design. The scenario was based on the delivery of a wrong product.

In section 1 of the scenario, participants were provided with the readings regarding major online service failure circumstance. Specifically, since we should not disregard the growing size of online Kakaostory stores in Korea, and considering the uniqueness that writing the comment is very prevalent and activated in Kakaostory, the author provided the scenario with the Kakaostory online service failure circumstance. In this case, the text was provided as, “You’ve ordered a shirt from Kakaostory online store. However, you have received a wrong product (a different product which you have not ordered).” After the scenario, the questions were provided to measure the participants’ emotions (frustration and doubtfulness) after the online service failure.

In section 2, explanation was manipulated. In the explanation manipulation group, participants received the scenario with other consumer explaining why the misdellivery has occurred and what they did to prevent the delay based on their past experience with the company. On the other hand, in the control condition, participants were not provided with any kinds of explanations. And then the same questions

(measuring frustration and doubt about the future service after receiving the explanation) were asked again to measure the emotional change from the explanation from other consumers.

And next, participants were asked after receiving explanation or no explanation from other consumer, the questions were asked in the order of the complaining intention and revisit intention towards the online Kakaostory store to measure each variables.

In sum, in the following study, the explanation and no explanation group were analyzed and compared to examine the moderating role of doubtfulness about the future service and the sequential mediating impact of: Explanation→Frustration→Complaining Intention→Revisit Intention.

### 3.1.2 Participants and Measures

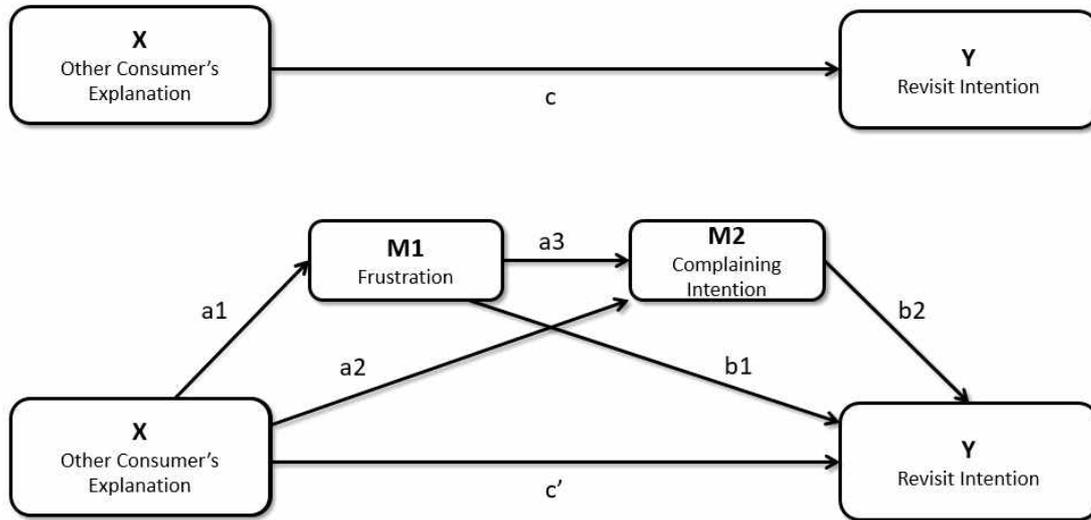
The participants consisted of 120 undergraduate students from Gangnam University. Among the participants, 20 Students were randomly selected and were provided with \$3 Starbucks gift for participation. The estimated ages of individuals were 21 to 28. Among 120 participants, 46% were male and 54% were female. All of the questionnaires were provided as seven-point Likert scales which ranged from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree” or 1 = “not at all” to 7 = “strong.” The measurement of anger and frustration was adopted from the Gelbrich’s article (2010). And the measurement for the revisit intention were borrowed from Taylor and Baker (1994). The author used the measurement for the complaining intention which was derived from Oh’s research (2002). Lastly, the doubtfulness about future service was modified and derived from Maria and Morel’s scale (2010) and the penn state worry questionnaire (PSWQ).

### 3.1.3 Results

**Multistep Mediation Analysis.** First of all, in this study, the data of two groups (retrospective explanation group and no explanation group) were submitted to a multistep mediation analysis with two sequential mediators (using the macro PROCESS, model 6; Hayes 2013).

As depicted in figure 2, the dependent variable (Y) was the intention to revisit the Kakaostory online store. The potential mediators were the degree of frustration the participants felt after receiving the explanation (or no explanation) from other consumers (M1) and the degree of participants' complaining intention (M2). The independent variable (X) was a dummy variable representing the two experimental conditions (retrospective vs. control). The path estimates confirmed the hypothesized multistep mediation process. First, the results confirmed the overall proposed chain of mediators, namely, frustration (M1) and complaining intention (M2), mediated the effect of other consumer's explanation on the revisit intention. When target consumers (whom have experienced the online service failure) received the retrospective explanation from other consumer, their frustration level decreased (path a1 in figure 2:  $B=-.57$ ,  $p<.02$ ), supporting the main hypothesis. And such retrospective emotion (anger and frustration) had a significant and positive impact on consumer's complaining intention (path a3 in figure 4:  $B=.56$ ,  $p<.0001$ ). We found this decrease in complaining intention had a significant and negative effect on the revisit intention (path b2 in figure 4:  $B=-.36$ ,  $p<.001$ ). No other paths were significant. The 95% CI for the indirect effect was obtained with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and supported the suggested multistep mediation ( $B=.11$ , 95% CI, .03 to .27). No other indirect effects were significant except for the above path. Table 1 summarizes the full results of the multistep mediation analysis.

**FIGURE 2**  
STUDY1: MULTISTEP MEDIATION MODEL

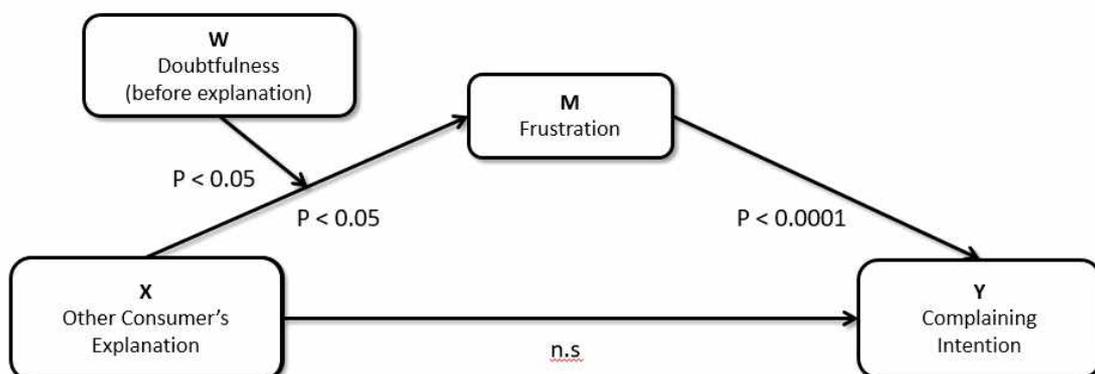


**TABLE 1**

<b>Model-Path Estimates</b>				
	coefficient	SE	T	p
a1	-.57	.23	-2.39	.01
a2	.07	.17	.42	.67
a3	.56	.06	8.48	.00
b1	.05	.08	.65	.51
b2	-.36	.09	-3.78	.0002
c	.13	.19	1.45	.14
c'	.22	.18	1.20	.23
<b>Indirect Effect (with Bootstrap 95% Confidence Level)</b>				
	Effect	SE	LL 95%	UL 95%
X→M1→Y	-.03	.04	-.15	.04
X→M2→Y	-.02	.06	-.17	.09
X→M1→M2→Y	.11	.05	.03	.27

**Moderated mediation.** A bootstrapping analysis was conducted to confirm the moderated mediation. This was conducted using SPSS with a sample size of 5000 (using the macro PROCESS, model 7; Hayes 2013). Considering the absence of Hayes model that exactly fits the current research model, the author adjusted the model to test the moderation effect of “doubtfulness about the future service” between other consumer’s explanation and the complaining intention which is depicted in figure 3. The results indicated that with the 95% confidence level, there was significant difference in the group with high doubt the CI for the indirect impact was significant and did not include zero [B=-0.35 95% CI (-0.61, -0.12)]. However there was no significant difference in a low doubt group [B=0.56 95% CI (-0.39, 1.83)]. So one could conclude that the doubt about the future service positively moderates the relationship between the other consumer’s explanation and the target consumer’s frustration. In other words, when consumers feel high doubtfulness about the future service, frustration could be considered as underlying mechanism between the other consumer’s explanation and the complaining intention, but not to the consumers with low doubtfulness about the future service.

**FIGURE 3**  
STUDY1: MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL



#### 3.1.4. Summary

This study examined the author's proposed hypotheses by manipulating the presence of explanation (explanation vs. no explanation). And the result of the laboratory experiment conducted supported the overall hypotheses. First, the result of the multistep mediation analysis confirmed the H1, H3a and H3b by showing the significance in 3 paths (Explanation → Frustration, Frustration → Complaining Intention, and Complaining Intention → Revisit Intention). Secondly, the result of the moderated mediation analysis supported the H2 by demonstrating the significant moderating effect of doubt on the relationship between the other consumer's explanation and the target consumer's frustration. In other words, participants whom were under the explanation condition reported a less mitigation impact on the frustration (high frustration level even after receiving the explanation from other consumers) when they had a high doubt about the future service compared to the low doubt about the future service.

## **CHAPTER 4 GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### 4.1 Conclusion

Online service failure is prevalent and inevitable nowadays. Thus online firms should focus on what would be the most effective way to recover such service failure. And this paper is meaningful in a way that it found out the significant mitigating impact of other consumer's explanation on the target consumer's frustration whereas prior research found out no mitigating impact of employee's retrospective explanation on the consumer's frustration. Again, the author's overall research model has basis on

Gelbrich's research framework but this main diminishing effect of frustration could be explained in a way that the impact is due to: (1) sharing emotional similarity buffers negative emotions (Townsend et al 2013), (2) frustration is a milder version of anger (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones 2004) so other consumer's retrospective explanation will reduce the frustration like employee's retrospective explanation mitigating the anger which was confirmed in Gelbrich's (2010) article. And according to the (3) Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), since frustrated consumers who blames the situation and were not expecting any help from the other consumers, the unexpected help from other consumers (CCB) will have more significant mitigating impact on the frustration (compared to the explanation from the employees since consumers are expecting somewhat from the firm).

Hence, these results from the current study implies us that the mitigating impact of retrospective explanation from other consumers is not only due to the empathy or emotional similarity buffering negative emotion but should be considered as one kind of customer citizenship behavior.

There still are debate about whether anger and frustration should be categorized as same retrospective emotions in psychological and marketing literature (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones). Gelbrich (2010) considered these two emotions as a distinct emotion and have argued that the reason employee's retrospective explanation could not decrease frustration was due to frustrated consumers attribute a goal incongruent event to situational factors (they do not blame the organization). So when retrospective explanation tells the consumer about the organization's view of failure, it does not decrease the frustrated consumer's goal incongruity. However it decreases angry consumer's goal incongruity since they blame the organization.

Current research shows that when the person doing the explanation is shifted

from the employees to the other consumers, the target consumer's frustration diminishes when they receive retrospective explanation. And one should note that this mitigation comes not only from simply sharing the similar emotions but should recognize that this explanation should be categorized as one of the CCB since other consumers are helping the target consumer by giving information support based on his or her past experience with the company. As a matter of fact, other consumers may not solve the current situation but may understand and relieve the target consumer's frustration. Thus other consumer's retrospective explanation should be categorized as one of the CCBs and when it comes to other consumers instead of employees, the frustration should be considered as milder form of anger (which falls under the same retrospective emotions).

Hence, we can say that current research model has its basis on the Gelbrich's conceptual model (Informational Support → Emotions → Coping Response) but adopts the theory that the anger and frustration belong to the same set of emotions (including dissatisfaction, displeasure, and resentment) that describe a general negative reaction to the goal incongruency.

In addition to the Townsend's findings (2013) about emotional similarity diminishing negative emotions, according to Nielsen, 92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising (Nielsen.com 2015). So we can infer from this fact that when it comes to other consumers explaining about the service failure (rather than the employees), target consumers trust their fellow consumers' explanation more than the employee's explanation. In this case, consumers may focus on their psychological state, not how they are going to solve the problem for them. So consumers will consider frustration as same retrospective emotion as anger but in a milder version according to another argument in the psychological and marketing literature (which opposes Gelbrich's point of view). This also supports the

idea how other consumer's retrospective explanation reduces retrospective emotion.

And they should note that the most effective way to reach this goal is through other consumers' explanation (CCB). Since the current research demonstrates that other consumer's retrospective explanation mitigates the target consumer's level of frustration, companies should retain their good consumers (who does the appropriate explanation) by rewarding them appropriately (for instance, companies could provide them with coupon or free sample every time they help other consumers by writing a comment on the web site).

Again, the point here is that not only firms should train their employees in appropriate way to reduce the negative emotions derived from the service failure but they should retain their royal customers since it's the consumers who does the CCB. One should note that CCB is the most effective tool since it does not cost any money to the firms. And according to the current research, other consumer's explanation may be more effective tool to reduce the negative emotions resulting from the service failure since they were in the same shoes before as compared to the employees (since employees may be viewed as simply doing their job to please or comfort uncomfortable consumers) the target consumers may regard the other consumer's explanation as more sincere.

In sum, current study supported the proposed hypotheses that the other consumer's retrospective explanation reduces the target consumer's retrospective emotion (frustration) and the consumers who felt high doubt still had high level of frustration even after receiving the other consumer's informational support. In other words, this research has been the first to examine the crucial moderating impact of consumer's doubtfulness about future service in explaining the relationship between the other consumer's explanation and the target consumer's frustration. In accordance to the

negativity bias theory and the result of the prior moderated mediation test, this research concludes that the doubt about the future service positively moderates the relationship between the other consumer's explanation and the frustration. In other words, when consumers feel high doubtfulness about the future service, frustration could be considered as underlying mechanism between the other consumer's explanation and the complaining intention, but not to the consumers with low doubtfulness about the future service.

In short, the most ideal strategy for the firms doing online shopping business to settle the service failure situation could be to properly combine the explanation from the employees and the explanation from the consumers who have already experienced the service failure.

#### 4.2 Limitations and Future research

Current study has several limitations and this gives us some directions to possible future research.

First of all, current research specifically examines the impact of other consumer's retrospective explanation on the target consumer's frustration (retrospective emotion). On the similar line, further research could also investigate the effects of other consumer's prospective explanation on the target consumer's prospective emotions (i.e. helplessness). In that case, the contribution would be meaningful in a more comprehensive way. In addition, future research could also examine other kinds of retrospective emotions (other than frustration) to increase the credibility of mitigating impact of other consumer's retrospective explanation on the retrospective emotions.

Secondly, present study only used considered the misdelivery situation and used

that as an online service failure scenario. Like many other researches, this research could not be generalized considering that only the partial of the online service failure situation is tested. So, in a broader sense, future research could provide various kinds of online service failure circumstances as a scenario so that the study could be generalized more easily.

#### 4.3 Contributions and Managerial Implications

Theoretically there are two main contributions which emerge from the present article. Our findings extend the prior research regarding informational support (literature) influencing consumer's emotion and finally having impact to the coping response.

Second contribution comes from the adding to the CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior) literature that this kind of CCB (other consumer's explanation) may reduce the negative emotions (in this research, frustration) which stems from the service failure and may eventually lead to the decrease in complaining intention and increase in revisit intention.

Also, findings from this article yield several implications to managers and firms currently engaging in online service industries.

The most important issue which can be inferred from the result of this study is that the companies doing the online business nowadays should not only train their employees or devise the appropriate monetary compensation but they should also pay more attention to retain their existing consumers via encouraging the CCB (specifically encourage other consumers to explain and give information support to the fellow consumers whom experienced the similar service failure). Moreover, online firms may give compensation to the consumers who did appropriate informational support to the

other consumers experiencing service failure. This may potentially be a very useful marketing strategy for the firms currently engaging in the online shopping service industry (especially for the small private business) since they don't have enough capital to hire many employees like other major companies.

Also, considering the study which was conducted to examine the moderating role of doubtfulness about the future service (when consumers feel high doubtfulness about the future service, anger and frustration could be considered as underlying mechanism between the other consumer's explanation and the complaining intention), we could say that it's difficult to change the doubt in consumer's mind when it is already felt (especially when it is high). So in a long term, it would be an optimal strategy for the firms to focus their effort on reducing the anger and frustration that consumers possess not on the doubtfulness. However, it should be emphasized again that consumers feeling high doubtfulness after the service failure should not be disregarded. They should be provided with different kind of compensation or marketing strategy to reduce the feeling of doubt about the future service. So, for the firms to retain their life-time customers, it is crucial to focus on their consumers whom are feeling frustration and should make their best effort to reduce that negative emotion in priority.

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## 요약 (국문초록)

### 서비스 실패 후 타 고객의 설명이 좌절에 미치는 영향 '의심'의 조절효과를 중심으로

최근 온라인 개인사업체가 증가하면서 온라인상에서의 서비스실패는 그 종류도 다양할뿐더러 피할 수 없다고 보여 진다. 본 연구는 온라인 서비스 실패 상황에서 타 고객의 설명이 서비스 실패를 겪은 타겟 고객의 화와 좌절에 미치는 영향을 중심으로 실증 조사하였다. 또한 다른 고객의 설명이 재방문 의도에 미치는 간접 경로를 화, 좌절과 불평의도가 순차적으로 매개한다고 가정하였고 서비스실패 후 발생한 의심의 조절효과도 알아보았다.

본 연구는 Gelbrich (2010)의 연구 중 직원의 과거지향적인 설명은 과거지향적인 감정을 완화시키고 미래지향적인 설명은 미래지향적인 감정을 완화시킨다는 기존 리서치 모델에 근거하였다. 따라서 본 연구에서는 구체적으로 다른 고객의 과거지향적인 설명이 과거지향적인 감정들 (화와 좌절)을 완화시킬 것이라고 예측하고 있다. 여기서 주목해야 할 점은 기존 연구결과 직원의 과거지향적인 설명은 화를 완화시켰지만 좌절은 완화시키지 못했다는 점이다. Gelbrich (2010) 는 그 이유를 화가 난 고객들은 기업에 서비스 실패의 책임을 묻지만 좌절한 고객들은 상황에 책임을 돌리기 때문에 기업의 입장을 대변하는 과거지향적인 설명은 좌절을 완화시키지 못한다고 보고 있다.

하지만 본 연구에서는 다른 고객으로 설명의 주체가 바뀌었을 때 그 본질이 고객 시민행동으로 바뀌게 되어 비슷한 감정을 공유함으로써 서비스 실패로 인해 겪는 부정적인 감정이 완화 될 것이라고 보고 있다. 또한 ECT이론에 근거하여 예상하지 못한 타고객의 설명으로 인한 완화효과를 볼 수 있다고 예상했으며, 좌절을 화보다

약한 감정으로서 같은 과거지향적 감정으로 분류된다는 Berkowitz 와 Harmon-Jones (2004)의 선행연구에 근거하여 좌절이 고객시민행동의 한 종류라고 구분 지을 수 있는 타고객의 설명으로 인한 도움으로 인해 감소한다고 보고 있다.

저자는 대학교 학부생들을 대상으로 최근 급증하고 있는 온라인 카카오톡에서 서비스실패상황을 시나리오로 제공하였다. 결과 데이터를 SPSS로 분석한 결과 4개의 경로계수가 모두 통계적으로 유의한 것으로 나타났다. 이러한 분석결과를 통해서 온라인 업계, 특히 댓글이 활성화 되어있는 카카오톡 개인사업체들은 고객들이 댓글로 서로 설명을 해주고 도움을 줄 수 있는 방안 (고객시민행동) 강구해야 할 것이며 설명의 주체가 직원에서 고객으로 바뀌었을 때 좌절의 완화효과가 나타난 것에 주목해야 할 것이다.

또한 본 연구에서는 이루어지지 않았던 타 고객의 미래지향적인 설명이 과연 타겟 고객의 미래지향적인 감정도 완화시켜줄 것인지 향후 연구를 통해 보다 의미 있고 폭 넓은 연구결과를 얻을 수 있겠다. 나아가 본 연구는 오배송이라는 한정된 서비스실패 시나리오를 제공했다는 한계점을 가지고 있으므로 연구의 일반화를 위해서 배송지연과 같은 다른 서비스실패 상황들을 모두 포괄하는 연구가 필요하다고 할 수 있겠다.

**주요어:** 다른 고객의 설명, 고객시민행동, 좌절, 의심, 불평의도, 재방문 의도

**학번:** 2015-20652







이렇게 오배송이 된 상황에서 **다른 소비자** (이전에 구매내역이 있는) 로부터 다음과 같은 답변을 댓글을 통해 듣게 됩니다.

다른 고객의 답변을 주의 깊게 살펴봐 주십시오.



**나**  
제가 주문한 옷이 아닌 다른 옷이 배송왔어요 어찌죠?  
10월 17일 오후 8:09 • ♥ 좋아요



**고객 1**  
저도 잘못왔어요ㅠㅠ 이번에 직원을 새로 뽑았는데 직원이 처음이라 잘 모르고 옷을 완전 잘 못 포장했다고 하던데요.  
10월 17일 오후 8:09 • ♥ 좋아요



**고객 2**  
맞아요.. 직원이 실수한 거래요. 주인 언니도 지금 엄청 정신없게 수습중이라고 들었어요.  
10월 17일 오후 8:13 • ♥ 좋아요

☞ 다음 페이지에 계속됩니다.

위와 같은 답변을 들었다고 가정해 보았을 때, 다음 질문에 답해 주십시오.

**Q11 나는 온라인 카카오토리 판매업체/업자에게 화가 난다.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
전혀 그렇지 않다			매우 그렇다			

**Q12 나는 온라인 카카오토리 판매업체/업자에게 분노를 느낀다.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
전혀 그렇지 않다			매우 그렇다			

**Q13 나는 온라인 카카오토리 판매업체/업자에게 노여움을 느낀다.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
전혀 그렇지 않다			매우 그렇다			

☞ 다음 페이지에 계속됩니다.







Q24 나는 다음 기회에도 현재 이용했던 이 카카오토리에서 구매를 할 것이다.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
전혀 그렇지 않다 매우 그렇다

Q25 나는 다른 사람이 다른 판매업체를 추천하더라도 계속해서 이 온라인 카카오토리 판매업체를 이용할 것이다.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
전혀 그렇지 않다 매우 그렇다

Q26 나는 과거 다른 업체에서 옷을 구매했더라도 현재 이용하고 있는 이 카카오토리 업체를 이용할 것이다.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
전혀 그렇지 않다 매우 그렇다

귀하의 성별은?

\_\_\_\_\_

귀하의 나이는?

\_\_\_\_\_

**핸드폰 번호**를 적어주시면 추첨을 통해 소정의 기프티콘을 드립니다.

\_\_\_\_\_

설문에 응해주셔서 대단히 감사합니다.