

# Customer-Contact Employee Support and Service Recovery Efforts: The Mediating Role of Job Burnout and Customer Orientation

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The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of customer-contact employees support on service recovery efforts. Service companies should try to prevent the service failure situation from occurring, but it is realistic that the service failure occurs due to the characteristics of the service. Service recovery efforts of service providers are important because effective responses to service failures can enhance customer satisfaction despite service failures. Social support for customer-contact employees needs to improve service recovery efforts. Specifically, this study focuses on the mediation roles of job burnout and customer orientation in relationship between social support for customer-contact employees and service recovery efforts. Social exchange theory was used as the theoretical underpinning of the research model. Based on reciprocity principle, this paper suppose that support for customer-contact employees and service recovery effort are a kind of social exchange relationship.

Social supports for customer-contact employees are categorized into internal and external organization. Internal organization is POS(perceived organizational support) and external organization is customer support. The research model was tested with the data gathered from the flight attendants whose emotional labor intensity was relatively high and the service failure frequently occurred. As a result of analysis, social supports for customer-contact employees classified into organizational support, supervisor support, and customer support are found to have differential impacts on job burnout and customer orientation. It has been found that job burnout of service providers is negatively affecting service recovery efforts. On the other hand, customer orientation of service providers has a positive influence on service recovery efforts.

Based on the results of the analysis, we provide practical implications for effective service recovery efforts in service failure situations, and suggest the theoretical implications to explain the process of service recovery effort. Finally, limitations of the study and directions for future research are suggested.

Key words: Employee Support, Job Burnout, Customer Orientation, Service Recovery Efforts

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## I. Introduction

The role of customer-contact employee is important, for the service is delivered through contact and interaction between the customer and the customer-contact employee in comparison with the tangible product. The attitudes and behaviors of customer-contact employee have a great influence on customer perception of service quality, which can ultimately be linked to the profitability of the company (Bowen and Peterson 1994). However, in the case of contact employees, frequent interaction with customers often causes mistakes or failures in the process of delivering services. Preventing service failures is a top priority, but there is always the possibility of service failures due to the characteristics of the service. Therefore, when a service failure occurs, it is very important to do some proper response and resolution efforts. Service recovery efforts in service marketing mean employees' efforts to resolve complaints and service failures when it happened. In the event of a service failure, the company can have an opportunity to build a stronger relationship with the customer than before the service failure through an aggressive and appropriate recovery effort.

This study focused on the process of improving service recovery efforts based on the importance of service recovery efforts in service failure situations. Research on service recovery has acknowledged that service failures can occur

and has been focused on how to actually recover from such service failures. In other words, previous researches related to service recovery have suggested solutions for service failures and verified the effectiveness of each method. As a method for service recovery, a variety of tools such as apology, recognition, explanation, and reward are found in previous researches. Kim and Moon (2017) introduces related specific methods of service recovery in detail. If the attitude or condition of the service recovery effort is not good, any service recovery method will not be effective, even though it is important how the service recovery is done. Previous studies on service recovery focus on methods and effects of service recovery; on the other hand, this study focuses on the process of increasing service recovery efforts.

The physical and psychological state of the employee at the contact point with the customer is important for the service recovery in order to recover the service smoothly. Employees' mental and physical conditions necessary to perform service recovery efforts are not able to be controlled or managed by only his- or herself effort. According to reciprocity in Social Exchange Theory (Blau 1964), perceived organizational support (POS) for employees in the exchange of organizational and employee relationships can lead to positive attitudes and behavioral behavior (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995; Liden and Maslyn 1998). Employees who receive a lot of support and encouragement from organizations

based on reciprocal principles with the organization are more likely to actively perform service recovery efforts. In exchange relations with employees, the reciprocal principle is that the social support besides the organization's support can also promote the employee's service recovery effort. The exchange parties, which are mainly contacted by employees during the service delivery process, may be internal to the organization such as direct supervisor or co-worker, but may have family members, friends, customers, etc. outside the organization. Among them, the attitude of the customer and the service behavior can be greatly changed depending on how the employee perceives the exchange relation with the customer whom the employee is facing (Yoon, 2009). In this study, the factors that can improve the employee's service recovery effort are divided into the organization and the customer in view of reciprocity.

The impact of organizational and customer support for employees on employee service recovery efforts is to provide a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between employee support and service recovery efforts by identifying how the state of mind and body has changed as a result of such support. In this study, the mediating variables are considered to understand the relationship between support for service contact employees and employee service recovery efforts. They are job burnout and customer orientation.

In previous researches, emotional labor, such

as the surface acting increases job burnout, resulting in lower quality of service for customers (Hochschild 1983). In jobs where consumer-contact is frequent, such as airline crew, call center counselors, hotel employees, etc., employee experiences stress due to emotional labor. Employees working at contact points with customers are in need of organizational support or customer support, because they are performing physical labor, mental labor, and emotional labor. This support can alleviate job burnout and positively affect service recovery efforts.

The higher the customer orientation of a service provider, the more likely it is to act to increase customer satisfaction, for service employees are not obligated to provide services to customers but rather as pleasure (Kelly 1992). So, it is expected that employees who are highly customer oriented will perform the service recovery efforts more actively and happily.

The purpose of this study can be summarized as follows. First, the improvement of the recovery effort itself rather than solving the service recovery effort of the employees is focused, and the influence of the main target organization and customer support in the exchange relationship with employees based on mutually reciprocal principle is analyzed. Second, the effects of organizational support and customer support on employee's service recovery effort were examined. Job burnout and customer orientation were considered as the mediating variables. In this case, the job

burnout was analyzed based on two different meanings. First one is the result of exhaustion, which means physical and mental exhaustion; and second one is psychological disengagement, from skepticism and cynicism about work.

## II. Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses

### 2.1 Service Recovery Efforts

It should be preceded by creating a situation in which service failure does not occur during service delivery process; however, unfortunately it is very difficult to fully control service failure in advance. Therefore, in addition to proactive prevention efforts for minimizing service failures, efforts to effectively overcome service failures are required at the same time by service companies. What causes the customer's serious dissatisfaction arises only in the process of recovering the service failure rather than the service failure itself (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault, 1990). This means that service recovery efforts are important because service recovery can lead to higher customer satisfaction than existing services even if a service failure occurs. Johnston (1999) analyzed the effectiveness of the service recovery strategy according to the severity of the service failure using the scenario method. That is, if a service failure occurs, customer

satisfaction can be achieved by actively seeking service recovery effort. This implies the effectiveness and importance of service recovery.

Previous studies related to service recovery have mainly focused on the means of effort used for service recovery. Bitner, Booms and Tetreault (1990) presented acknowledgment, explanation, apologize, and reward as methods for service recovery effort. In addition, there are some differences according to criteria that classify the methods of service recovery efforts including urgent restoration, empathy, and symbolic follow-up confirmation (Bell and Zemke 1987). However, these researches shows a common feature to see the effect of each method of service recovery effort. Kim and Moon (2017) examined how to list the recovery strategies for service failures in view of customers, and demonstrated the effect of each service recovery strategy. In this study, the classification criteria of service recovery strategies in previous studies and the effect of dividing recovery strategy into monetary dimension, behavioral dimension, and psychological dimension are examined.

In the case of interaction with customers at customer contacts, such as airline crews, customer interactions are often exposed to negative situations such as customer complaints or service failures. Long-term exposure to a negative situation will accumulate stresses, which will make it difficult for service failures to occur and at the same time to make appropriate recovery efforts for service failures. Therefore,

the psychological and mental status of employees who are engaged in job performance is important for active and smooth service recovery effort.

## 2.2 Job Burnout and Customer Orientation

### 2.2.1 Job Burnout

It is known that dealing with customers directly leads to a variety of job stresses, and cumulative long-term stresses caused by frequent customer-facing occupations with frequent human contact are likely to lead to job burnout (Maslach and Schaufeli, 1993). Therefore, it is highly likely to appear to employee in the field of providing continuous and repeated customer contact services in the process of maintaining close relationship with others for a long time.

Causes of job burnout include personal factors such as the nature of employees, customer factors such as customer expectations or contact frequency, and workplace environmental factors such as workload. Among these factors, customer-related factors such as customer contact frequency are known to be the most frequent cause of job burnout (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993). Job burnout can be defined as an emotional and physically exhausted state due to the negative psychological experience experienced by exposure to long-term job stress (Maslach and Schaufeli 1993). Job burnout is present in many people who work for people, and it is a phenomenon of ineffectiveness and

loss of meaning due to physical and mental exhaustion. The biggest problem of job burnout is that once it happens, it gets worse. As a result of gradual development of job burnout, employee experience psychological separation from their work experience, fatigue, and cynical and rigid reactions (Cherniss 1980).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which was developed for service workers, is commonly used as a concept and component of job burnout (Maslach 1982). According to this study, the concept of job burnout is composed of exhaustion, disengagement, and reduced feelings of reduced personal accomplishment that can occur to employees in the service industry. Burnout means physical and mental exhaustion. Psychological deviation from work means having a skeptical and cynical attitude toward work. On the other hand, 'low personal fulfillment' dimension is not only the lowest correlation with the other two dimensions of job burnout (Lee and Ashforth 1996), but also is a concept that reflects personal personality characteristics similar to self-efficacy (Cordes and Dougherty

Recently, several studies also tend to measure the components of job burnout as "exhaustion" and "psychological departure from work" (Park and Kim 2006; Park and Lee 2014; Shin 2003).

Based on previous researches, in this study, depletion and psychological departure were identified as key components of job burnout. In the case of service employees' job burnout

experience, it is known that they are less interested in others as a defensive response strategy, try to maintain psychological distance themselves, and even increase the possibility of negative behavior (Maslach 1982). Job burnout leads to a decline in the quality of their work, especially in service workers, which can have a negative impact on customer service. Therefore, if employee job burnout increases, the possibility of not actively engaging in service recovery efforts increases, and there may be a risk that the situation may worsen rather than solve service failure. Based on the above, the following hypothesis was presented.

*H1: Depletion of job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on service recovery efforts (recognition, explanation, apology).*

*H1-1: Depletion of job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on recognition.*

*H1-2: Depletion of job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on explanation.*

*H1-3: Depletion of job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on apology.*

*H2: Deviations from job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on service recovery efforts (recognition, explanation, apology).*

*H2-1: Deviations from job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on recognition.*

*H2-2: Deviations from job burnout will have a negative(-) impact on explanation.*

*H2-3: Deviations from job burnout will have*

*a negative(-) impact on apology.*

## 2.2.2 Customer Orientation

Customer orientation refers to the temperament or propensity of the employee to meet the customer's desire in the work environment, and is a personal characteristic required of the contact person to directly deal with the customer (Brown, Mowen, Donovan and Licata 2002). It can be defined as the motivation and ability of employees to help their customers in making decisions that satisfy their needs and desires (Hofman and Ingram 1991). Service providers 'performance activities to satisfy customers' desires with customer interests first are important in terms of continuous relationship with customers and corporate performance, and customer orientation of service employees is required for this. Customer orientation is important because high-customer-oriented employees strive to satisfy their customers (Kelly 1992).

It is known that personality characteristics such as customer orientation of contact employees, who frequently interact with customers, affect positive or negative responses in social interaction. Service employees with high customer orientation are more likely to want to know what their customers want, and are less stressed by excessive expectations and ambiguous expectations of customers (Babakus et al. 2009). Employees with high customer orientation are highly competent to provide customer service based

on positive attitude with joy. Therefore, customer orientation of employees is expected to have a positive impact on service recovery efforts.

*H3: Customer orientation will have a positive (+) impact on service recovery efforts (recognition, explanation, apology).*

*H3-1: Customer orientation will have a positive(+) impact on recognition.*

*H3-2: Customer orientation will have a positive(+) impact on explanation.*

*H3-3: Customer orientation will have a positive(+) impact on apology.*

## 2.3 Employee Support

Social support encourages individuals to believe that they are being cared for and loved, to feel valued and worthy, and to be part of a network of communication and mutual accountability. It is known that it may be given from the inside of an organization such as a supervisor and a colleague, may be given from the outside such as a family member and an acquaintance, and reduces stress and job burnout and increases the job ability (Park 2014; Choi 2016)

Bernier (1998) conducted in-depth interviews with 20 service workers and 16 other field specialists. As a result, social support, economic support, and organizational support were found to promote psychological exhaustion recovery (Choi et al. 2015) In the service industry, the main social interaction target of the customer

contact person is the customer who purchases the service from outside the organization and the role communicator (manager, superiors, colleagues, subordinates, etc.) within the organization (Choi 2016). Based on these findings, this study divided into organizational support and customer support as a source of support for service employees.

### 2.3.1 Organizational Support

Organizational support is defined by the broad beliefs of employees related to the extent to which an organization values the contributions of its employees and cares about their welfare (Eisenberger 1986). The perception of organizational support includes not only external support such as wage and promotion provided by the organization but also psychological support through social interaction (Kwon et al. 2015).

Organizational support includes instrumental and emotional support of supervisors and colleagues as well as programs to help them perform smoothly, which serves as a means to mitigate the negative impact of emotional labor (Park and Kim 2009). In addition, it is possible to improve the job attitude by finding support from the organization and positive effect on job performance and innovative proposal (Yoon 2009).

Organizational members asserted that they can feel the duty of exchange to be more

committed to the organization by recognizing support from the organization, such as care and support (Jun 2015). The concept of organizational support is based on reciprocity norms and is therefore an important concept for explaining the exchange relationship between the organization and its members (Oh et al. 2013). In this respect, recognition of organizational support has a duty to reward members, resulting in emotional commitment to the organization, the efforts of the members to achieve the organization's goals, and can be expressed as desirable response behaviors such as job performance and organizational commitment (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). According to the reciprocity principle of social exchange theory, the more employees perceive organization support, the greater the sense of duty to compensate for the organization's behaviors (Bettencourt 1997).

*H4: Organizational support will have a negative (-) impact on job burnout, and a positive (+) effect on customer orientation.*

*H4-1: Organizational support will have a negative(-) impact on depletion of job burnout.*

*H4-2: Organizational support will have a negative(-) impact on deviations from job burnout.*

*H4-3: Organizational support will have a positive(+) effect on customer orientation.*

### 2.3.2 Customer Support

Customer emotions can affect employee emotions in the workplace. In addition, in the process of interaction between customers and employees, customer emotions can infect employee emotions and have a significant impact on their future behavior. Employee perceptions of exchange relationships with customers have significant managerial implications because they have a strong impact on their service performance (Yoon, 2009).

Unlike products, services generate and consume at the same time, and this concurrency allows the service customer to participate in the service delivery process when the service is performed. According to Mohr and Bitner (1995), customer behaviors and attitudes in customer interactions are important factors in determining employee effort. In other words, if the attitude and behavior of the customer at the service contact point is positive for the service provider, the employee makes the best effort (Yoon 2000). This means that the principle of reciprocity can work not only in relation to employees and organizations, but also in exchanges between employees and customers.

*H5: Customer support will have a positive (+) impact on customer orientation, and negative (-) influence on job burnout.*

*H5-1: Customer support will have a negative (-) influence on depletion of job*



burnout.

H5-2: Customer support will have a negative (-) influence on deviations from job burnout.

H5-3: Customer support will have a positive (+) impact on customer orientation.

### III. Empirical Analysis

#### 3.1 Research Model and Data Collection

The research model to be analyzed empirically in this study is shown in <Figure 1>. This study focuses on the process of relationship between service support and service recovery effort, and considering job burnout(depletion, deviation) and customer orientation as a mediating factor.

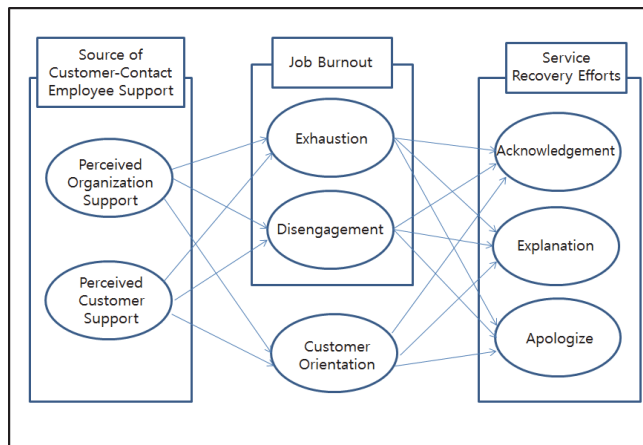
Service support employees are divided into

organizational support and customer support.

The research model was verified with the data gathered from the flight crews whose emotional labor intensity was relatively high and the service failure occurred. Specifically, the questionnaire survey was conducted for the cabin crews working on domestic airlines, and 146 departments were used for the final analysis.

As for the characteristics of the survey respondents, the sex ratio was found to be female (97.3%) and male (2.7%) due to the specificity of the airline. Age was in the order of 30s (56.8%), 40s (32.9%), and 20s (10.3%). Marriage was married (69.2%) and unmarried (30.8%), the married crew was higher than expected. The number of years of service was the highest in 6-10 years (34.9%), followed by 16 ~ 20 years (28.1%) and 11 ~ 15 years (26.7%). In terms of rank, the order of advisor (45.9%), secretary (39.0%), general crew

<Figure 1> Research Model



(11.6%) and internship crew (3.4%). In the case of job, the upper class (69.9%), manager (19.2%) and EY class (11.0%) are distributed in order.

<Table 1> General characteristics of survey respondents

| Survey Items  | Characteristics      | Frequendy (Person) | Ratio (%) |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Sex           | Male                 | 4                  | 2.7       |
|               | Female               | 142                | 97.3      |
| Age           | 20s                  | 15                 | 10.3      |
|               | 30s                  | 83                 | 56.8      |
|               | 40s                  | 48                 | 32.9      |
|               | Unmarried            | 45                 | 30.8      |
| Marriage      | Married              | 101                | 69.2      |
|               | 1~5 years            | 11                 | 7.5       |
|               | 6~10 years           | 51                 | 34.9      |
| Service Years | 11~15 years          | 39                 | 26.7      |
|               | 16~20 years          | 41                 | 28.1      |
|               | 21~25 years          | 2                  | 1.4       |
|               | 26~30 years          | 2                  | 1.4       |
|               | Internship Crew      | 5                  | 3.4       |
| Rank          | General Crew         | 17                 | 11.6      |
|               | Advisor              | 67                 | 45.9      |
|               | Secreetary or higher | 57                 | 39.0      |
| Job           | EY Class             | 16                 | 11.0      |
|               | Upper Class          | 102                | 69.9      |
|               | Manager              | 28                 | 19.2      |

### 3.2 Questionnaire

In this research, the endogenous variables are service recovery effort, job burnout, and customer orientation. Exogenous variables are social support for customer contact employees.

Because the service recovery effort focuses on the psychological aspects of this study, we used items other than compensation among the recognition, explanation, apology, and compensation presented in the study of Bitner et al. (1990). Recognition, explanation, and apology in service failure situations are dimensions that can be performed by customer contact employees in almost all situations. On the other hand, economic restoration efforts such as compensation can not always be performed because it is possible to provide services depending on the situation, and the discretion that can be exercised by the customer contact employee can be limited.

Recognition is based on three items (eg, 'I listened earnestly to the customer when the customer complained'), explanation is based on three items (eg 'I fully explained the cause of the problem to the complainant'), and apology is based on three items (eg, 'I sincerely apologize to the complainant') were measured on a 5 point Likert scale.

Job burnout and customer orientation considered as mediating variables in the research model were measured in 8 items (Maslah Burnout Inventory) and 4 items (Brown et al. 2002) based on the related studies. Job burnout is due to depletion (4 items, eg. 'I feel my mind and body become exhausted after I work') and psychological deviations from work (4 items, eg. 'I feel sick and tired of my job'), respectively. Customer orientation was selected from the items of Brown et al. (2002), which

are commonly used in related studies, and only items that are appropriate for the purpose of this study were selected. After that, it was measured based on 4 items ('I enjoy the service to the customer', etc.), and it was used properly based on airline cabin service situation.

The social support for customer contact employees considered as exogenous variables was adapted to the situation of this study based on the study of Caplan et al. (1980). Social support can be classified into three categories according to the source, such as organizational support (eg, 'My company regards my opinions as important') and customer support (eg, 'Customers share my opinion'), respectively.

### 3.3 Reliability and Validity Test

Prior to the hypothesis testing, reliability was examined through Cronbach's alpha test to check the internal consistency of each variable, and validity of convergence validity and discriminant validity were examined using confirmatory factor analysis. As shown in <Table 2>, Cronbach's alpha is 0.8 or higher (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994), and Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extract (AVE) values obtained after confirmatory factor analysis were both above the allowable levels of 0.5 and 0.7 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). In addition, confirmatory factor analysis showed that the fit index ( $\chi^2 = 482.886$ ,  $df = 296$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.631$ , GFI = 0.916, NFI = 0.847, IFI

= 0.935, TLI = 0.921, CFI = 0.933, RMSEA = 0.066) Were found to be good. In general, if the  $\chi^2 / df$  value is less than 3, the overall fitness is satisfied. If RMSEA is less than 0.05, NFI, CFI, GFI, and TLI are more than 0.9 (Klein 1998).

The following four steps were performed to verify the validity of the discriminant validity.

First, it was confirmed that the 95% standard error interval for the correlation coefficients between the constitutional concepts did not include 1. As a result of examining the correlation coefficients between the constructs showing the relationship between the eight theoretical variables used in the research model, it was confirmed that 1.0 is not included in the confidence interval ( $\pm 2 SE$ ) of the coefficient. Second, the  $\chi^2$  difference between the model with constraint 1 and the model without constraint was verified.  $\chi^2$  value ( $\Delta \chi^2 > 3.84$ ), the non-constraint model showed higher fit than the constraint model in all pairs. Third, it was confirmed that the mean variance extracted value (AVE) does not exceed the square of the correlation coefficient between concepts (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, it was confirmed that the correlation between the constructs was lower than .85, and the correlation coefficients were all smaller, indicating that the discriminant validity was secured among the factors (Kline 1998). Collectively, the collected data for hypothesis testing are judged as fulfilling the validity of the measurement

〈Table 2〉 Reliability Test and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

| item             |   | construct                                      | St. Estimate | S.E.  | C.R.   | AVE   | CR    | Cronbach's a |
|------------------|---|--|--------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------------|
| POS1             | ← | Perceived<br>Organization Support              | 1.000        |       |        | 0.790 | 0.756 | 0.918        |
| POS2             | ← |  | 1.233        | 0.129 | 9.557  |       |       |              |
| POS3             | ← |  | 0.930        | 0.109 | 8.501  |       |       |              |
| PCS1             | ← | Perceived<br>Customer<br>Support               | 1.000        |       |        | 0.869 | 0.856 | 0.843        |
| PCS2             | ← |  | 1.094        | 0.100 | 10.910 |       |       |              |
| PCS3             | ← |  | 0.989        | 0.107 | 9.253  |       |       |              |
| Exhaustion1      | ← | Job Burnout<br>-<br>Exhaustion                 | 1.000        |       |        | 0.915 | 0.910 | 0.935        |
| Exhaustion2      | ← |  | 1.015        | 0.063 | 16.215 |       |       |              |
| Exhaustion3      | ← |  | 1.012        | 0.065 | 15.597 |       |       |              |
| Exhaustion4      | ← |  | 0.954        | 0.069 | 13.899 |       |       |              |
| Disengagement1   | ← | Job Burnout<br>-<br>Disengagement              | 1.000        |       |        | 0.859 | 0.890 | 0.888        |
| Disengagement2   | ← |  | 1.318        | 0.133 | 11.710 |       |       |              |
| Disengagement3   | ← |  | 1.352        | 0.112 | 12.043 |       |       |              |
| Disengagement4   | ← |  | 1.296        | 0.131 | 9.931  |       |       |              |
| CO1              | ← | Customer<br>Orientation                        | 1.000        |       |        | 0.903 | 0.888 | 0.890        |
| CO2              | ← |  | 1.045        | 0.088 | 11.919 |       |       |              |
| CO3              | ← |  | 1.157        | 0.095 | 12.221 |       |       |              |
| CO4              | ← |  | 0.921        | 0.092 | 9.965  |       |       |              |
| Acknowledgement1 | ← | Service Recovery<br>Effect<br>-Acknowledgement | 1.000        |       |        | 0.809 | 0.805 | 0.899        |
| Acknowledgement2 | ← |  | 1.025        | 0.073 | 14.045 |       |       |              |
| Acknowledgement3 | ← |  | 0.907        | 0.074 | 12.248 |       |       |              |
| Explanation1     | ← | Service Recovery<br>Effect<br>-Explanation     | 1.000        |       |        | 0.818 | 0.807 | 0.950        |
| Explanation2     | ← |  | 1.003        | 0.053 | 18.971 |       |       |              |
| Explanation3     | ← |  | 1.022        | 0.049 | 20.900 |       |       |              |
| Apologize1       | ← | Service Recovery<br>Effect<br>-Apologize       | 1.000        |       |        | 0.875 | 0.865 | 0.804        |
| Apologize2       | ← |  | 0.745        | 0.073 | 10.149 |       |       |              |
| Apologize3       | ← |  | 0.511        | 0.070 | 7.287  |       |       |              |

$\chi^2=482.886$ ,  $df=296$ ,  $\chi^2/df=1.631$ ,  $GFI=0.916$ ,  $NFI=0.847$ ,  $IFI=0.935$ ,  $TLI=0.921$ ,  $CFI=0.933$ ,  $RMSEA=0.066$

concepts used in the study.

Before the hypothesis test, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the rough relationship between the variables used in this study. As shown in 〈Table 3〉, it was judged that the relationships established in the hypothesis had

overall directionality.

### 3.4 Hypothesis Test

The structural equation model was used for hypothesis testing. As a result of the analysis,

<Table 3> Correlation Analysis

| construct       | Mean  | St.d | (1)   | (2)    | (3)    | (4)    | (5)    | (6)    | (7)     | (8)     |
|-----------------|-------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Acknowledgement | 4.208 | .735 | 1.000 | .376** | .528** | .233** | .103   | .287** | -.108   | -.297** |
| Explanation     | 4.184 | .662 |       | 1.000  | .347** | .090   | .154   | .100   | .001    | -.167*  |
| Apologize       | 4.164 | .654 |       |        | 1.000  | .265** | .275** | .332** | .068    | -.326** |
| POS             | 2.208 | .884 |       |        |        | 1.000  | .429** | .323** | -.293** | -.397** |
| PCS             | 2.726 | .810 |       |        |        |        | 1.000  | .460** | -.144   | -.334** |
| CO              | 3.536 | .740 |       |        |        |        |        | 1.000  | -.031   | -.470** |
| Exhaustion      | 3.899 | .962 |       |        |        |        |        |        | 1.000   | .361**  |
| Disengagement   | 2.574 | .930 |       |        |        |        |        |        |         | 1.000   |

\*\* $p < .01$

the fitness of the model is  $\chi^2 = 592.395$ ,  $df = 308$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 0.949$ ,  $GFI = 0.877$ ,  $NFI = 0.913$ ,  $IFI = 0.900$ ,  $TLI = 0.885$ ,  $CFI = 0.899$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.080$ , indicating that most fit indices show a level of approximation to the recommended values (Hair et al. 2006).

The hypothesis test results are as follows. First, Hypothesis 1 indicates that burnout (depletion) of airline crews will have a negative impact on service recovery efforts. The effect of the depletion of job burnout of the contact crew on the recognition ( $\beta = 0.063$ ,  $t = -.282$ ) and explanation ( $\beta = 0.060$ ,  $t = .870$ ) was not statistically significant. On the other hand, the effect of burnout on apology was positively significant, but was found to be inversely proportional to the expected negative effect of hypothesis ( $\beta = 0.068$ ,  $t = 2.778$ ). Explanations are discussed in the implications.

Second, Hypothesis 2 was supported that the job burnout of airline crews would have a

negative impact on service recovery efforts.

The departure of consumer-contact crew has a partially significant effect on recognition ( $\beta = 0.092$ ,  $t = -3.025$ ), and has a negatively significant effect on apology ( $\beta = 0.102$ ,  $t = -4.875$ ).

Third, Hypothesis 3 shows that customer orientation of airline crew will have a positive effect on service recovery effort, and influence is different according to dimension of service recovery effort. The influence of customer orientation on recognition was partially significant in the positive direction ( $\beta = 0.094$ ,  $t = 1.800$ ), and the effect on the explanation was not statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.088$ ,  $t = .267$ ). Customer orientation has positive (+) effect on apology ( $\beta = 0.100$ ,  $t = 2.777$ ).

Fourth, hypothesis 4 is that organizational support for airline crews reduces job burnout and increases customer orientation.

The results show that the effect of organizational

〈Table 4〉 Results of Hypotheses Test

| H      | Path                                   | St. Estimate | t-value | p-value | Result        |
|--------|--|--------------|---------|---------|---------------|
| H1a(+) | Exhaustion → Acknowledgement           | .063         | -.282   | .778    | not supported |
| H1b(+) | Exhaustion → Explanation               | .060         | .870    | .384    | not supported |
| H1c(+) | Exhaustion → Apologize                 | .068         | 2.778   | .005    | supported     |
| H2a(-) | Disengagement → Acknowledgement        | .092         | -3.025  | .002    | supported     |
| H2b(-) | Disengagement → Explanation            | .085         | -2.300  | .021    | supported     |
| H2c(-) | Disengagement → Apologize              | .102         | -4.875  | .000    | supported     |
| H3a(+) | Customer Orientation → Acknowledgement | .094         | 1.800   | .072    | not supported |
| H3b(+) | Customer Orientation → Explanation     | .088         | .267    | .789    | not supported |
| H3c(+) | Customer Orientation → Apologize       | .100         | 2.277   | .023    | supported     |
| H4a(-) | POS → Exhaustion                       | .138         | -1.674  | .094    | not supported |
| H4b(-) | POS → Disengagement                    | .100         | -2.747  | .006    | supported     |
| H4c(-) | POS → Customer Orientation             | .090         | 2.200   | .028    | supported     |
| H5a(-) | PCS → Exhaustion                       | .131         | -.719   | .472    | not supported |
| H5b(-) | PCS → Disengagement                    | .096         | -2.870  | .004    | supported     |
| H5c(-) | PCS → Customer Orientation             | .091         | 4.871   | .000    | supported     |

$\chi^2=592.395$ ,  $df=308$ ,  $\chi^2/df=0.949$ ,  $GFI=0.877$ ,  $NFI=0.913$ ,  $IFI=0.900$ ,  $TLI=0.885$ ,  $CFI=0.899$ ,  $RMSEA=0.080$   
 \*\* $p < .01$

support on depletion of job burning is partially significant ( $\beta = 0.138$ ,  $t = -1.674$ ), negative impact on deviation from job burnout( $\beta = 0.100$ ,  $t = -2.747$ ), and positive impact on customer orientation( $\beta=0.090$ ,  $t=2.777$ ).

Finally, Hypothesis 5 suggests that customer support for airline crews will affect job burnout and customer orientation, and that the effect of customer support on exhaustion is not statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.131$ ,  $t = -.719$ ). Customer support has negative effect on deviation from job burnout( $\beta = 0.096$ ,  $t = -2.870$ ), and has positive effects on customer orientation ( $\beta = 0.091$ ,  $t = 4.871$ ).

## IV. Conclusion

### 4.1 Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of crew members who work at customer contact points on service recovery effort based on social exchange theory. It is demonstrated that support for exchange relationship with employees can improve service recovery effort according to mutually reciprocal principle. In order to explain the relationship between these variables, job burnout and customer orientation are introduced as mediating variables. The

results of this study show that organizational support and customer support have a significant effect on service recovery effort through mediation of job burnout and customer orientation, and showed that the influence is distinctive.

Specifically, depletion among the dimensions of job burnout was not significant in the recognition and explanation in terms of service recovery effort, and only positive influence was found in apology. In the hypothesis, negative (-) effect was predicted, but directionality was significantly reversed. Depletion is a state of exhaustion due to excessive work or accumulation of stress. Even though the mind and body are exhausted, it can be inferred that the crew are performing basic or minimal efforts to recover the service in case of service failure, but they are not actively and genuinely recovering. The effects of depletion on apology in the direction of positive (+) rather than negative (-) direction require careful interpretation as well as additional review and analysis.

One of the interpretations can be that the attitude of the crew working on resolving the service failure in the state of being exhausted from mind and body is a way to avoid the negative situation quickly.

The deviation from job burnout indicates a state of departure from work, and the analysis shows that exits are decreasing at all levels of service recovery efforts. This means that when a crew reaches a negative emotional situation such as a feeling of skepticism about what he

or she is doing, it leads to passive and reluctant tasks to be performed.

The effect of customer orientation on service recovery effort was found to have a positive effect on recognition and apology, and no effect on explanations. When a customer with a high customer orientation is faced with a service failure situation, it shows a recovery effort to acknowledge and apologize for the situation by thinking and responding to the customer.

Organizational support reduces job burnout, such as depletion and deviation, while increasing customer orientation.

Customer support did not affect the depletion, and it was found to reduce deviation. In addition, customer support plays a role in enhancing customer orientation.

Based on the above, the contributions of this study are as follows.

First, this study focused on enhancing service recovery effort by expanding previous studies based on the method and effect of service recovery effort. In order for the effectiveness of the service recovery effort to be positive, it is also important to select a suitable one from among the recovery methods, but it is reasonable that this selection strategy is preceded by attitude and commitment to actual service recovery efforts. Because the methods chosen to make up for service failures are close to a kind of instrumental approach, it is necessary to proactively create conditions to strengthen the service recovery effort itself.

Second, strengthening the service recovery efforts of the crew is limited to leaving the crew alone. In this study, the effect of social support is emphasized in order to strengthen the recovery effort. In particular, based on social exchange theory, the source of social support was divided into organization and customer dimension. After recognizing the level of support the crew receives from the organization and the support it receives from the customer, the employees have shown that they are rewarding for the organization and for the customer. According to the resource conservation theory, an individual is limited in the amount of resources that can accommodate stress, so that in the event that a deficient resource can be satisfied in another area, the loss of resources of the individual is minimized and the work can be performed normally or positively.

Third, to explain the process of social support including the organization and the customer to the recovery efforts of the crew, we considered the job burnout and customer orientation as the mediating variables. There are some differences depending on the source of social support for employees, but what is important is that when the crew receives warm consideration or help from an organization or customer in exchange with them, this benefit reduces the feeling of exhaustion in the job, customer orientation, and the improvement of service recovery effort through this process.

## 4.2 Implications and Limitations

It is important to satisfy internal customers prior to external customer satisfaction, and it is important to encourage them to do their jobs. According to the norm of reciprocity in social exchange theory, employees can put more effort into the activities of out-of-office activities, as well as those whose roles are defined to reward organizations for their gratitude and satisfaction they experience. If the organizational support is considered to be lower than the input to the task performance, the desired response behavior may be withdrawn or reduced. The diversity of support that employees perceive is a prerequisite for strengthening service recovery efforts. For this purpose, it is important for service companies to provide various employee support programs to directly mitigate the stress of employees. By providing psychological and economic support such as policy, encouragement, interest, help, and compensation necessary to reduce job burnout and increase customer orientation, a virtuous cycle structure that leads to an increase in profitability of the company through improvement of service effort should be made.

This study divides the sources of social support for employees into internal and external organizations. Outside the organization, there are a variety of family, friends, and customers. Among them, customers who interact with employees and service contacts are given priority.



The result of analysis shows that customer support reduces psychological departure from job burnout and increases customer orientation. Customer participation is inevitable in the service delivery process, and in this process, it is a new strategic opportunity to attract customer support rather than just participation. There is a need to develop opportunities to find such support in practice.

The limitations of this study and future research directions are as follows.

First, the dimension of service recovery effort is limited to recognition, explanation and apology. In future research, it is necessary to analyze the relationship between service support effort and service support effort so as to understand the relationship between service support effort and recovery effort psychologically, economically, and behaviorally.

Second, additional factors needed to reinforce service recovery efforts need to be further investigated, and identification of boundary conditions that can control the impact of additional factors on service recovery efforts, as well as social support, may be meaningful (eg, The type of service failure situation or the importance or severity of the failure).

Finally, this study is based on self - report of all variables measured by employees, and the data used in the research were measured at one point. Because it is designed with self-report measurement and cross-sectional study, there is a limitation in explaining emotions or

conditions that change with time. In particular, when performing a service recovery effort due to a service failure, the stress generated in this process may cause job burnout. And if the outcome of the service recovery effort results in a positive response from the customer, it can receive support or compensation from the organization or customer. Therefore, it would be meaningful to approach the causal relationship between the research concepts included in this study from other perspectives. To do this, longitudinal research is needed to understand the causal relationship of the presented variables.

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## 〈Appendix〉 Questionnaire

### 1. Organizational Support

- My company takes my opinion seriously.
- Our company gives generous encouragement to my service
- I can get help from the company when I have a problem with my work

### 2. Customer Support

- Customer agrees with me
- Customer gives generous encouragement to my service
- I can get help from customers when I have problems with my work

### 3. Job Burnout

- I feel exhausted after work.
- After I work, I feel exhausted even to my emotions.
- I have to rest more time than usual to recover my body
- I do not have enough strength to enjoy leisure activities after work

### 4. Customer orientation

- I enjoy servicing my customers.
- I have a natural exchange of emotions with customers
- I feel happy by making my customers happy.
- I enjoy responding promptly to customer requests.

### 5. Service recovery efforts

#### Recognition

- I immediately reacted when the customer complained
- I listened earnestly from the customer's point of view when the customer complained
- I really sympathized with customers when they complained.

#### Explanation

- I fully explained to the complainant the cause of the problem
- I fully explained to the complainant the process of resolving the problem
- I fully explained the results of the problem to the complainant

#### apology

- I sincerely apologize to the complainant.
- I apologized to the complainant again after the problem was solved.
- I fully considered and accepted the opinions of the complainants.