

Who is to blame? The Attribution of Negative Touchpoints and its Impact on Overall Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

Nowadays, with the growing level of competition among service providers and the increased ease with which experiences can be shared, the level of customer satisfaction is of crucial importance for service providers. Although much is known about disconfirmation of expectations and its influence on consumers' level of (dis)satisfaction, little is known about what factors determine the way consumers attribute a negative touchpoint within a journey and how this attribution may impact word of mouth, switching or repurchasing behavior. This research attempts to identify how a negative touchpoint in different parts of a service journey influence the way customers interpret this experience and how they further translate it into actions. Findings show the differential effect of the order of the events on customer satisfaction: overall satisfaction depends on the recency of the event in the experience; however, the attribution depends on the primacy of the event in the experience.

Keywords: *customer journey; customer satisfaction; attribution*

Track: Services Marketing