

## **DID YOU COMPLAIN OR NOT? [0, 1]**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer complaining behavior is a phenomenon of great interest and practical importance in services. It is being slowly advanced through the application of different samples, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques. Structural equation modeling and ordinary least squares regression are at the forefront of current complaint research, but are limited in some ways by their reliance on scenario-based data and prospective complaint intention self-reports. The use of these methods is generating a solid base for continued research into actual failure occurrences and complaining behavior, but the theories need support from real events and retrospective response behaviors in addition to contrived events.

In reality, complaining behavior is typically not a prospective occurrence. In other words, customers either complain or they do not complain. This is not to say that there are not degrees to which consumers complain or multiple avenues through which consumers may seek to complain simultaneously. The current focus is couched within a dichotomous decision framework, whereby consumers either complain or do not complain in response to a service failure.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODS**

This paper presents a study that utilizes binary logistic regression to complement existing complaining behavior studies with customer responses to actual failure incidents. Several constructs, previously unexamined in complaining behavior, are also examined to continue building the theory base. Need for power, a positive attitude toward complaining, perceived effectiveness in complaining, consumer collectivist tendencies, failure severity, and service provider blame are expected to positively relate to complaining behavior. Need for affiliation is expected to negatively relate to complaining behavior.

The primary advantage of using binary logistic regression is that it allows for the analysis of real failure responses instead of prospective future intentions in response to contrived scenarios. Consumers either complain following a failure or they do not, which implies a dichotomous outcome. Intention to complain (prospective) is typically measured on a Likert scale following a description of a failure scenario. This is a valuable measurement technique, but as Spangenberg and Sprott (2006) point out, behavioral intentions and actual behaviors frequently are not highly correlated. Complainers also cannot be properly separated from non-complainers with Likert items. Consumers can only be identified by their prospective levels of intent to complain in the future.

### **FINDINGS**

Public complaining, and more specifically interactive complaining, exhibited a negative relationship between power and complaining behavior. In other words, need for power reduces the likelihood that an individual will complain. Need for power was also not significant in private or remote complaining. Attitude toward complaining exhibited a positive relationship with public complaining, and more specifically interactive complaining. Private complaining and remote complaining were not affected by attitude toward complaining. Need for affiliation was not a significant predictor of any form of complaining. The interaction between need for affiliation and power and need for affiliation and attitude toward complaining were significant and in the hypothesized direction for public complaining, and more specifically interactive complaining. Perceived consumer effectiveness was positively related to public complaining, both interactive and remote. Consumer collectivist tendencies did not affect any type of complaining. Failure severity was positively related to public complaining, both interactive and remote, as well as private complaining. Finally, fault was only found to significantly relate to remote complaining, but in the opposite direction from what was expected.

### **REFERENCES**

References Available Upon Request