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Moderating Effects of Relationship Length and Contact Frequency on Customer Citizenship Behaviors

Cover Page Footnote

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Moderating Effects of Relationship Length and Contact Frequency on Customer Citizenship Behaviors

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KEYWORDS: *Relationship length; Contact frequency; Customer citizenship behaviors; Customer affective commitment; Service industry*

Executive Summary: Studies show that contact frequency and relationship length impact co-creative and in-role behaviors with service providers. However, their influence on extra-role or customer citizenship behaviors (CCBs) remains unexplored. This study delves into the moderating role of relationship length and contact frequency within the CCB model. Utilizing an online survey (n = 665), the study unveils that perceived justice's impact on affective commitment is not moderated by contact frequency, whereas the impact is stronger in short-term than in longer-term relationships. The perceived support-affective commitment-CCBs relationship is stronger in high contact than in low contact group. Similarly, the relationship is stronger for customers in long-term interaction with service providers. CCBs more strongly influence continuous relationship intention for low contact customers, but there is no difference in the association across the relationship length. This study contributes an original viewpoint by investigating the intervening effects of contact frequency and relationship length in the CCB model.

Introduction

The relationship marketing literature describes customer citizenship behaviors (CCBs) as vehicles for improved customer value and streamlined business operations (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). When customers participate in CCBs, they resemble “partial employees” and contribute their knowledge, creativity and value to an organization (Bowen et al., 2000). CCBs may include customer ideation, referrals and

helping behaviors that can improve the quality of an organization's offerings. CCBs seemingly fall beyond the traditional scope of in-role or required customer performances (Bove et al., 2009; Groth, 2005; Yi & Gong, 2008). Additionally, some researchers have distinguished CCBs from customer participation or coproduction, which are similar types of value co-creation (Groth, 2005; Yi & Gong, 2013). While customer participation or coproduction refers to in-role or required actions, CCBs

represent extra-role or discretionary behaviors that can provide extraordinary value to a service firm but are not required of the customer (Groth, 2005; Yi & Gong, 2013). This study then focuses on CCBs as extra-role behaviors that can help marketers derive additional benefits from customer relationships, defined here as “voluntary and discretionary behaviors that are not required for the successful production and delivery of the service but that, in the aggregate, help the service organization overall” (Groth, 2005, p. 11).

Preexisting studies of CCBs have focused on consequences of customer participation or cooperation such as consumer value and quality perceptions (Chan et al., 2010; Yi & Gong, 2008). Many studies have also identified antecedents of customer participation or cooperation including commitment, satisfaction, and loyalty (Auh et al., 2007; Bettencourt, 1997; Bove et al., 2009). Additionally, perceived organizational support and affective commitment have received significant attention as crucial antecedents of CCBs. However, there is to date no study that investigates the moderating role of contact frequency and relationship length between service providers and customers. According to Dagger et al. (2009), relationship quantity factors such as contact frequency and relationship length are even more essential to build stronger customer relationships than relationship quality variables (e.g., commitment, trust, and satisfaction). Since customers develop perceptions of service providers based on previous interactions, contact frequency and relationship length are important levers for shaping consumer

attitudes towards CCBs. Hence, the current study aims to investigate the moderating effects of contact frequency and relationship length on consumer attitudes, perceptions and their participation in Customer Citizenship Behaviors (CCBs). As the first investigation on the moderating effects of relationship quantity factors, this study contributes interesting theoretical insights to the marketing literature.

In addition to these proposed theoretical contributions, the current study offers several managerial implications. Ostensibly, it is impossible for service providers to force customers to participate in discretionary or voluntary activities. Yet, service providers may learn to stimulate customers’ willingness to contribute new ideas, fulfill business tasks and help resolve incidents. Moreover, a steadier relationship may encourage customers to provide more information or behave more eagerly and proactively for their service providers, because they will likely have more confidence in and familiarity with them. Thus, the findings of this study can advise service marketers on how to improve marketing communications and relationships with their customers to motivate CCBs.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The Effect of Customer Perceived Justice on Customer Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is defined as “an affective or emotional attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the

organization” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 2). Affective commitment, then, refers to psychological attachment toward an exchange partner based on feelings of affiliation and identification (Gundlach et al., 1995). According to Lind and Tyler (1988), when employees believe they have received favorable and fair treatment, they are more likely to feel affective commitment and strong affiliations with an organization. More recently, Ha and Ha (2015) demonstrate that organizational justice positively and significantly influences affective commitment in a team sports context. Similarly, Moorman et al. (1992) theorize that the perceived quality of a customer-provider interaction increases a customer’s commitment to a given service provider. In addition, Matos et al. (2009) find that customer perceived justice, defined as the customers’ evaluation of the service organization based on fulfillment of its obligation to provide outcomes and benefits that the organization has promised (Bowen et al., 1999; Yi & Gong, 2008), is positively related to consumer satisfaction. Choi and Lotz (2017) demonstrate the positive relationship between customers’ perceived organizational justice and their affective commitment in the service contexts.

However, it may be difficult for new or infrequent customers to have well-developed perceptions of a service provider. Initially, a customer’s relationship history may be too short, and they may lack sufficient knowledge for routine decision-making. When customers lack familiarity with service providers, they may more carefully evaluate the attributes or benefits of their service experiences (Coulter &

Coulter, 2002). Sabote and Roman (2009) show that customers tend to rely primarily on personal delivery factors such as respect, genuine interest, and deference during early stages of their relationships. Service providers tap into these personal delivery factors to achieve positive outcomes including customer satisfaction and trust (Nicholson et al., 2001). According to Dietz et al. (2004), direct interaction and frequent contact help develop beliefs and attitudes toward an exchange partner. Contact frequency especially has been viewed as an indicator of relationship strength and as a substitute for measures of reciprocity and friendship (Dagger et al., 2009; Nelson, 1989). Dietz et al. (2004) argue that contact frequency encourages information sharing and increases knowledge of an exchange partner. Their empirical study confirms that contact frequency between service employees and customers strengthens their relationships. Similarly, Nicholson et al. (2001) demonstrate that contact frequency between relational partners increases their shared commitments. We, therefore, hypothesize a moderating effect of contact frequency on the impact of customer-perceived justice on affective commitment:

H1a: Contact frequency between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between customer perceived justice and customer affective commitment such that customer perceived justice has a stronger positive effect on customer affective commitment in high contract frequency than in low contract frequency.

However, the effect of the personal delivery factors on customer perceptions and

attitudes may weaken over time. According to Butcher et al. (2001), customers' interactions with employees and satisfaction are crucial to the early stages of evaluation. Additionally, Sabiote and Roman (2009) found within the hair salon context that the shorter the relationship length, the stronger social regard customers seem to hold of service employees. Specifically, social regard refers to employee behavior characterized by the concern, deference and genuine respect that underscore consumer trust and satisfaction. Based on these empirical findings, it makes sense that customer-perceived justice could be informed by personal delivery factors. For example, perceived justice seems to accrue from customers' perceptions of respect, interest, and deference during initial service encounters. Thus, perceived justice should have a strong impact on affective commitment as an outcome from these accompanying personal delivery factors. Nevertheless, research suggests that affective commitment increases over time, leading customers to decrease their reliance on personal delivery factors, as they also form emotional bonds, and gain satisfaction and trust with service providers (Verhoef et al., 2002). Thus, we propose that relationship length reduces the positive effect of customer-perceived justice on customer affective commitment:

H1b: Relationship length between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between customer-perceived justice and customer affective commitment such that customer-perceived justice has a stronger positive effect on customer affective commitment in

short-term relationships than in long-term relationships.

The Effect of Customer Perceived Support on Customer Affective Commitment

According to social exchange theory, individuals channel their efforts and commitment toward an object that benefits them (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory has inspired empirical researchers to test and confirm the positive impact of perceived organizational support on affective commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001; Shore et al., 2006). In line with this logic, Bettencourt (1997) demonstrates that customer-perceived support, which refers to "the extent to which the organization values the customers' contributions and cares about their well-being" (Keh & Teo, 2001, p. 373), positively affects customer commitment, resulting in voluntary performances. Also, customer-perceived support increases positive affect in a service delivery situation (Yi & Gong, 2008). Keh and Teo (2001) argue that customer-perceived support positively influences customer perceptions and behaviors toward an organization. Nevertheless, no studies to date have investigated the moderating role of contact frequency and relationship length on the relationship between customer-perceived support and customer affective commitment. It is possible that the richness of customer-perceived support increases with contact frequency and relationship length with a service firm. During the early stage of a relationship, customers may not have any actual basis on which to assess perceived support due to inexperience with the service provider. Therefore, customer-

perceived support may be developed through repeated occurrences of procedural fairness (Shore & Shore, 1995).

Lei and Mac (2005) demonstrate that contact frequency with a bus service enhances the interrelationship between service quality and customer loyalty through cumulative service encounters. Ha and Jang (2010) argue that familiarity, which depends on the total number of accumulated contacts and service experiences, positively moderates the relationships among customer value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. These empirical studies support the reasoning that contact frequency enhances the impact of customer-perceived support on affective commitment. Consequently, we propose that the positive influence of customer perceived support on customer affective commitment will be stronger (weaker) for customers who have more (less) frequently interacted with the service provider:

H2a: Contact frequency between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between customer perceived support and customer affective commitment such that customer perceived support has a stronger positive effect on customer affective commitment in high contact situations than in low contact situations.

We expect that relationship length will increase the positive effect of customer-perceived support on customer affective commitment. As stated earlier, customers need time to accumulate and reflect upon the organizational support conveyed

through various service encounters. Long-term relationships with service providers help customers to gain stronger perceptions of organizational support. Yet, investigations of the moderating effects of relationship length, overall, seem to be very limited within the CCB literature. To our knowledge, there is no empirical research to date that clearly shows whether relationship length moderates the association between customer-perceived support and affective commitment.

While Grayson and Ambler (1999) found that relationship length does not moderate the link between perceived quality of interaction and commitment to a service provider, by contrast, Wang and Wu (2012) demonstrate that relationship length increases the path value for the association between perceived value and customer loyalty. Gounaris and Venetis (2002) also confirm that hard and soft process quality become more important for a customer to develop trust as the relationship matures. In this study, hard process quality refers to the measurable performance and accuracy of service delivery, whereas soft process quality represents the essence and subjective understanding of an interaction between two parties involved in a relationship or service encounter (Gounaris & Venetis, 2002; Szmigin, 1993). Likewise, the nature of customer-perceived support may resemble the two dimensions of service quality, defined here as the extent to which the organization values customers' contributions and cares about their well-being (Keh & Teo, 2001). Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2b: Relationship length between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between customer-perceived support and customer affective commitment such that customer-perceived support has a stronger positive effect on customer affective commitment in long-term relationships than in short-term relationships.

The Effect of Customer Affective Commitment on Customer Citizenship Behaviors

Organizational studies have argued that commitment provides incentives for an employee to engage in reciprocal behaviors that will benefit their organization (Organ, 1990). Kumar et al. (1994), for example, find that organizational affective commitment enhances relationship performance. Meyer et al. (1993) also mention that organizational affective commitment leads to team cooperation, problem-solving and proactive behaviors. Along the same lines, Bettencourt (1997) finds that customer affective commitment similarly leads to voluntary behaviors. Customer affective commitment heightens affiliations, feelings of attachment, and customer referrals (Verhoef et al., 2002). Recently, Anaza and Zhao (2013) demonstrate that customer affective commitment results in helping behaviors and citizenship behaviors toward online retailers such as providing constructive ideas for service performance. According to Dagger et al. (2009), limited interactions between customers and marketers are not strong enough to build relationships. As mentioned earlier, more frequent contact between parties leads to familiarity with their behaviors and the

development of similar opinions, beliefs, and attitudes. Furthermore, contact frequency enhances information sharing and produces between two parties an increased knowledge of each other and mutual understandings of their needs (Dietz et al., 2004). We, therefore, propose that contact frequency positively moderates the positive impact of customer affective commitment on Customer Citizenship Behaviors (CCBs):

H3a: Contact frequency between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between customer affective commitment and CCBs such that customer affective commitment has a stronger positive effect on CCBs in high contact frequency situations than in low contact frequency ones.

However, there are inconsistent findings pertaining to how relationship length can moderate the journey to behavioral intentions. Seiders et al. (2005) found that relationship length does not impact the association between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Sabote and Roman (2009), likewise, show that relationship length does not moderate the effect of perceived social regard when acting on word-of-mouth information. Moreover, there is no significant difference between the effects of short-term and long-term relationships on commitment to a service provider (Grayson & Ambler, 1999). Lee et al. (2015) counter that, new and inexperienced customers may face high risks and uncertainties in their decision-making. Thus, as relationships become longer, customers become more

knowledgeable and experienced with service providers. This knowledge and experience gives customers added confidence in their relationships and willingness to transact with service providers. Conceivably, the confidence developed through direct experiences with a service provider may be a predictor of relationship length (Verhoef et al., 2002). This reasoning supports the finding of Bolton (1998), that is, customer satisfaction and repurchase intention depends on the length of customers' prior experiences with brands and companies. Similarly, Verhoef et al. (2002) observe that relationship age strengthens the influence of affective commitment on customer referrals and number of services purchased. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H3b: Relationship length between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between customer affective commitment and CCBs such that customer affective commitment has a stronger positive effect on CCBs in long-term relationships than in short-term relationships.

The Effect of CCBs on Intention to Continue the Relationship

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) seem to improve organizational performance because they invigorate social ties, thereby increasing operational efficiency and effectiveness (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). For example, the more employees brainstorm and solve problems together, the less time it requires to complete projects within an organization.

Also, high levels of such helping behaviors reduce employee turnover, which improves organizational productivity (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). Yet, there is little research on the consequences of CCBs. Auh et al. (2007) point out that coproduction increases purchase intentions and consumer expenditures due to the positive evaluations gleaned from collaborating with an organization. According to Dong et al. (2008), customers who experience service recoveries through direct participation may perceive less risk and gain more confidence to cooperate and engage in future collaborations. Cermak et al. (2011) also demonstrate that donations and voluntary participation can lead to positive future outcomes, such as recommending and repurchasing from a service provider. Another recent study finds that CCBs can help cement customer participation and may reduce turnover intention (Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015).

Reinartz and Kumar (2000) argue that customers become more value conscious as their relationships mature. Hence, customers in higher contact and longer-term relationships to pay closer attention to their personal contributions over time including the money, efforts, energy, and so on that customers have made to an organization. Contact frequency between parties can reflect personal commitment or effort within the relationship (Nicholson et al., 2001), and this effort is an important factor in determining relationship continuity (Crosby et al., 1990). Moreover, frequent interactions allow customers to have more opportunities to participate in CCBs, and in turn, influences intentions to continue and

build ongoing relationships with service providers. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

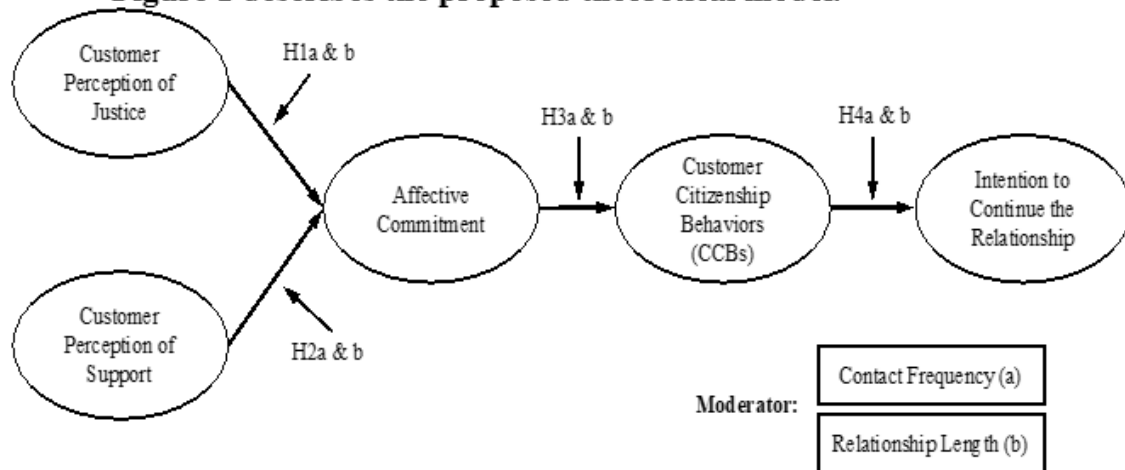
H4a: Contact frequency between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between CCBs and intention to continue the relationship such that CCBs have a stronger positive effect on intention to continue the relationship in high contact frequency situations than in low contact frequency ones.

Verhoef et al. (2002) comment that customers in long-term relationships may have stronger confidence in the price paid for their services. Accordingly, Ganesan (1994) proposes transaction costs in a business-to-business relationship include adapting and reinforcing agreement terms so that two parties can reach consensus and build an agreement to their satisfaction. Because B-to-B relationships often depend upon high transaction costs, industrial clients find it most advantageous to maintain long-term relationships with suppliers and corporate partners. In line

with this rationale, customers can contribute their time, skills, and knowledge to service providers through CCBs. For example, customers who suggest constructive ideas in an effort to improve service quality must be willing to share their creativity, skills and knowledge during these collaborations. De Cannière et al. (2010) further demonstrate that longer relationships strengthen behavioral intentions, when derived from consumer trust, commitment, and satisfaction. In addition, Goodman et al. (1995) and Smith and Swinyard (1983) argue that relationship length increases customer interactivity and learning experiences, which enhances the actual antecedents of buying behavior. Thus:

H4b: Relationship length between customers and service providers moderates the positive relationship between CCBs and intention to continue the relationship such that CCBs have a stronger positive effect on intention to continue the relationship in long-term relationships than in short-term relationships.

Figure 1 describes the proposed theoretical model.



RESULTS

Reliability and Validity Testing

To refine the scales and confirm CCB subdimensions, we carried out an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in the form of principle components analysis with varimax rotation. If the factor loadings did not meet commonly accepted criteria, the items were removed, i.e., commonalities ($\geq .30$), cross-loadings ($\leq .40$), and factor loadings ($\geq .50$). As a result, four items were retained for customer perceived justice ($\alpha=.960$), four items for customer perceived support ($\alpha=.924$), and five items for customer affective commitment ($\alpha=.933$). In addition, EFA confirmed the four subdimensions of CCBs: Helping ($\alpha=.898$), Advocacy ($\alpha=.922$), Tolerance ($\alpha=.724$), and Feedback ($\alpha=.713$).

To evaluate internal consistency and validity of the measures, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted (AMOS 22.0). Items that did not meet acceptable cutoffs for standardized loadings ($\geq .50$), construct reliability ($\geq .70$), and AVE ($\geq .50$) were removed for further analysis (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The CFA result revealed

that the model fit is acceptable: $\chi^2(377)=1148.661$; $p<.000$; CFI=.959; TLI=.952; IFI=.959; RMSEA=.056(.052~.059). The construct reliability of each construct ranged from .704 to .960, and the AVE for all constructs was at an acceptable level (.500 to .856), thereby supporting convergent validity. The AVE of each construct was compared with the squared intercorrelation (SIC) to test for discriminant validity (Table 2). The SIC between each pair of constructs, except for customer perceived justice and customer perceived support (feedback and helping), did not exceed the AVE of each construct. Furthermore, a pairwise Chi-square difference test was conducted to verify discriminant validity between these two sets (Bagozzi et al., 1991). For each set, the Chi-square of the constrained models was compared with that of the unconstrained model. The result showed that the Chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$) between the two models was significant: customer perceived justice and customer perceived support ($\Delta\chi^2=79.968$) and Feedback and Helping ($\Delta\chi^2=20.299$) ($\Delta df=1$, $p<.001$). Thus, discriminant validity for all constructs was confirmed.

Table 1. CFA results and scale items

Construct and Item	Std. Loading
Customer Perceived Justice (CR=.960; AVE=.856)	
▪ Overall, I am treated fairly by the service provider.	.927
▪ In general, I can count on this service provider to be fair.	.935
▪ In general, the treatment I receive from the service provider is fair.	.918
▪ For the most part, the service provider treats its customers fairly.	.920
Customer Perceived Support (CR=.923; AVE=.751)	
▪ The service provider values my contribution to its well-being.	.818
▪ The service provider cares about my opinions.	.844
▪ The service provider tries to provide the best service possible.	.892
▪ The service provider cares about my general satisfaction.	.910
Customer Affective Commitment (CR=.933; AVE=.737)	
▪ I feel a strong sense of belonging to the service provider.	.900
▪ This service provider has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	.861
▪ I feel emotionally attached to the service provider.	.832
▪ I am proud to belong to this service provider.	.838
▪ I feel like part of the family at the service provider.	.859
CCBs	
<i>Helping (CR=.899; AVE=.691)</i>	
▪ I have assisted other customers when they needed my help.	.849
▪ I have helped other customers when they seemed to have problems.	.866
▪ I have taught other customers to use the service correctly.	.784
▪ I have given advice to other customers.	.824
<i>Advocacy (CR=.925; AVE=.804)</i>	
▪ I have encouraged friends and relatives to use the service organization.	.859
▪ I have recommended the service organization and the employee to others.	.926
▪ I have said positive things about the service organization and the employee to others.	.903
<i>Tolerance (CR=.730; AVE=.501)</i>	
▪ I have put up with it when the service was not delivered as expected.	.572
▪ I have been patient and waited for the employee to recover from a mistake.	.774
▪ I have adapted to the situation when I have waited longer than I expected to receive the service.	.712
<i>Feedback (CR=.704; AVE=.500)</i>	
▪ When I had a useful idea on how to improve service, I let the service organization know.	.756
▪ When I <u>have had</u> feedback about the service, I filled out a customer survey form.	.618
▪ I have informed the service provider about great service received from an individual employee.	.618
Intention to Continue the Relationship (CR=.955; AVE=.842)	
▪ I consider the service provider as my first choice compared to other service providers.	.874
▪ I have a strong intention to visit the service provider again.	.903
▪ I intend to continue using the service provider in the near future.	.949
▪ Overall, I will keep using the service provider as regularly as I do now.	.943

Note: CR=Construct Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted.

Model Invariance Testing

Before testing the moderating effect of relationship length in the proposed theoretical model, two-group measurement invariance models were employed to confirm the constructs were measured similarly between the two groups within contact frequency and relationship length that were split at the median: low-contact (N=333) vs. high-contact (N=332) and short-term relationship (N=282) vs. long-term relationship (N=383), respectively. The configural invariance model was indicated with $\chi^2(754)=1741.14$; $p<.000$; CFI=.947; TLI=.939; IFI=.948; RMSEA=.044(.042~.047); full metric invariance model with $\chi^2(776)=1763.336$; $p<.000$; CFI=.947;

TLI=.941; IFI=.948; RMSEA=.044 (.041~.047); and intercept invariance model: $\chi^2(806)=1822.850$; $p<.000$; CFI=.946; TLI=.942; IFI=.946; RMSEA=.044(.041~.046). The model fit indices of each measurement invariance model for contact frequency are the following:

First, the Chi-square between the configural invariance model and the full metric invariance model was compared to test if the constructs were measured similarly in both groups (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). For contact frequency, the result showed that the Chi-square difference was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2=22.195$, $\Delta df=22$, $p=.448$), confirming the similarity of the factor structure between the two groups.

Table 2. Discriminant validity testing: AVE and SIC.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	SD
1. Customer Perceived Justice	.856	.949	.350	.019	.619	.107	.045	.596	5.54	1.43
2. Customer Perceived Support		.751	.462	.046	.635	.100	.081	.560	5.24	1.44
3. Customer Affective Commitment			.737	.177	.392	.089	.226	.277	4.19	1.56
4. Helping				.691	.131	.216	.575	.030	3.81	1.58
5. Advocacy					.804	.216	.213	.430	5.01	1.61
6. Tolerance						.501	.235	.091	4.59	1.31
7. Feedback							.500	.038	4.12	1.48
8. Intention to Continue the Relationship								.842	5.48	1.62

Note. SD=Standard Deviation; The numbers in the diagonal line are the average variance extracted (AVE) by each construct. The numbers above the diagonal are the squared intercorrelation coefficients (SIC) between the constructs.

Next, the full metric invariance model was compared to the intercept invariance model, which constrains intercepts of all observed items to be equal. The Chi-square difference between the two models was significant ($\Delta\chi^2=59.516$, $\Delta df=30$, $p<.01$). Cheung and Rensvold (2002) argue that a difference of larger than .01 in the CFI indicates a meaningful change in the model fit. In this study, the difference in the CFI between the full metric and the intercept invariance model was not greater than .01 ($\Delta CFI=-.001$, $\Delta TLI=.001$, $\Delta IFI=.002$, $\Delta RMSEA=.000$). Moreover, the 90% confidence intervals for RMSEA overlapped (Cadiz et al., 2009; Wang and Russell, 2005). As a result, strong factorial invariance of the proposed model between two groups was confirmed.

For relationship length, Chi-square difference between the configural invariance model and the full metric invariance model was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2=27.322$, $\Delta df=22$, $p=.199$), but the Chi-square difference between the full metric invariance and the intercept invariance model was significant ($\Delta\chi^2=76.300$, $\Delta df=30$, $p<.001$). However, the difference in the CFI, TLI, and IFI between the two models was not greater than .01 ($\Delta CFI=-.003$, $\Delta TLI=.001$, $\Delta IFI=.003$, $\Delta RMSEA=.000$), and RMSEA overlapped within the 90% confidence interval. As a result, strong factorial invariance of the proposed model between the two groups was confirmed.

Structural Model: Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized direct relationships between constructs and the

moderating effects of contact frequency and relationship length with a service provider.

Direct effects. The results of SEM confirmed the direct relationships between constructs ($\chi^2(389)=1974.766$; $p<.000$; CFI=.915; TLI=.905; IFI=.915 RMSEA=.078(.075~.082)). Specifically, customer perceived justice and customer perceived support have the positive impact on customer affective commitment ($\beta=.218$; $p<.01$ and $\beta=.483$; $p<.001$, respectively). Customer affective commitment significantly and positively influences CCBs ($\beta=.767$; $p<.001$). Last, CCBs are positively related to intention to continue the relationship ($\beta=.467$; $p<.001$).

Moderating effects of contact frequency

First, we tested whether contact frequency moderates the effect of customers' perceptions on their behaviors in various service settings. A structural invariance model was established by constraining all paths to be equal across two groups. Then, the constrained model was compared with the baseline model, not constraining all paths across the two groups. The result revealed that all paths between the two groups were significant different ($\Delta\chi^2=38.265$, $\Delta df=5$, $p<.001$). Because the differences in the CFI, TLI, and IFI between the two models were less than .01 ($\Delta CFI=.002$, $\Delta TLI=.001$, $\Delta IFI=.002$, $\Delta RMSEA=.001$), the structural invariance between the two models was confirmed.

The present study predicted that the effect of customer-perceived justice on customer affective commitment would be greater in the high-contact frequency group than in the low-contact frequency group. The

result, however, showed that there was no difference between the two groups, high- and low-contact frequency, in the positive influence of customer perceived justice on customer affective commitment, not supporting H1a ($\Delta\chi^2=1.151$, $p=.283$). H2a proposed that customer-perceived support would have a stronger and more positive impact on customer affective commitment when customers more frequently rather than less frequently contact a service provider. Consistent with the prediction, the result revealed a significant difference between the two groups ($\Delta\chi^2=8.928$, $p<.01$), and the effect of customer perceived support on customer affective commitment was greater in the high-contact frequency than in the low-contact frequency group ($\beta=.654$; $p<.001$ and $\beta=.277$; $p<.05$, respectively). Thus, H2a was supported.

Additionally, this study hypothesized that

the higher the contact frequency with the service provider the greater the effect of customer affective commitment on CCBs. The result supported H3a, as the effect of customer affective commitment on CCBs was significantly stronger in the high-contact than in the low-contact frequency group ($\beta=.830$; $p<.001$ and $\beta=.704$; $p<.001$, respectively), demonstrating a clear difference between the two groups ($\Delta\chi^2=7.729$, $p<.01$). Lastly, H4a predicted that CCBs would more strongly influence intention to continue the relationship in a high-contact frequency rather than a low-contact frequency situation. Contrary to the prediction, however, the results indicated that the positive impact of CCBs on intention to continue the relationship was stronger during low-contact frequency than high-contact frequency ($\beta=.758$; $p<.001$ and $\beta=.647$; $p<.001$, respectively; $\Delta\chi^2=10.888$, $p<.01$). The results of hypotheses testing are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of moderating effect testing.

Path	Contact frequency			Relationship length		
	Low contact	High contact	$\Delta\chi^2$	Short term	Long term	$\Delta\chi^2$
Perceived Justice → Affective Commitment	.332*	.134	1.151	.313*	.182*	6.235*
Perceived Support → Affective Commitment	.277*	.654***	8.928**	.342*	.549***	7.249*
Affective Commitment → CCBs	.704***	.830***	7.729**	.661***	.788***	4.996*
CCBs → Intention to Continue the Relationship	.758***	.647***	10.888**	.761***	.646***	2.026
Model fit	$\chi^2(805)=2457.071$; $p<.000$; CFI=.912; TLI=.905; IFI=.912 RMSEA=.056(.053~.058)			$\chi^2(805)=2341.179$; $p<.000$; CFI=.917; TLI=.910; IFI=.917 RMSEA=.054(.051~.056)		

Note. * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$.

Moderating the effects of relationship length

To test the moderating role of relationship length, a structural invariance model was also established by constraining all paths to be equal across two groups. Then, the constrained model was compared with the baseline model, not constraining all paths across the two groups. The findings revealed that all paths were the same between the two groups ($\Delta\chi^2=14.449$, $\Delta df=5$, $p>.001$).

H1b proposed that the positive effect of customer-perceived justice on customer affective commitment would be stronger in the short-term relationship than in the long-term relationship group. In line with the hypothesis, the result showed that the path coefficient to link customer perceived justice and customer affective commitment was significantly higher in the short-term than in the long-term relationship group, supporting H1b ($\gamma=.313$; $p<.05$ and $\gamma=.182$; $p<.05$, respectively). On the contrary, H2b predicted that customer-perceived support would have stronger impact on customer affective commitment when customers have a longer relationship with their service provider than when they are in a short-term relationship. Consistent with this prediction, the results indicated a significant difference between the two groups ($\Delta\chi^2=7.249$, $p<.01$), showing that the long-term relationship group has the greater effect of customer perceived support on customer affective commitment compared to the short-term relationship group ($\beta=.549$; $p<.001$ and $\beta=.342$; $p<.05$, respectively). Thus, H2b was supported.

Furthermore, the result supported H3b as the effect of customer affective commitment on CCBs was significantly stronger in the long-term than in the short-term relationship group ($\beta=.788$; $p<.001$ and $\beta=.661$; $p<.001$, respectively; $\Delta\chi^2=4.996$, $p<.05$). Thus, relationship length moderates the positive association between customer affective commitment and CCBs. Lastly, the results did not support H4b as there is no difference in the impact of CCBs on intention to continue the relationship between the short-term and the long-term relationship group ($\Delta\chi^2=2.026$, $p=.155$). However, CCBs significantly and positively influence intention to continue the relationship in both groups (see Table 3).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

By situating CCBs within the services literature, this study provides valuable insights and theoretical contributions to extant models of consumer behavior. The present study demonstrates that perceived justice is an important predictor of perceived support. Although prior empirical research has confirmed this relationship (DeConinck, 2010; Masterson et al., 2000; Shore & Shore, 1995), these studies have solely focused on employees' perceptions of their experiences with organizations. To our knowledge, no research has explored the association between perceived justice and perceived support in the customer context. Moreover, previous studies only highlight aspects of procedural and distributive justice, while this study identifies the effect of overall customer perceptions of justice

on customer perceived support. As the first study to investigate these associations, the findings are especially relevant and meaningful to the services sector. To consider customers as quasi-employees, we commissioned social exchange theory and understandings of psychological contract and subsequently unpacked the factors that influence CCBs and benefit service firms. As previously discussed, the organizational literature has mainly tested organizational support, perception of organizational justice, and affective commitment as predictors of employees' OCBs (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Rhoades et al., 2001; Shore et al., 2006). Along the same lines, this research confirms that customer-perceived justice and customer-perceived support significantly increase customer affective commitment, and in turn influence CCBs.

Additionally, the current study focuses on CCBs that respondents actually performed for their service organizations in the past. Prior research has mostly examined intentions or willingness to participate in CCBs rather than actual CCBs; therefore, the self-reporting of actual performances of CCBs in the current study is quite meaningful. Furthermore, the measurement of actual behaviors enabled this study not only to investigate customers' intentions to continue their relationships with service providers as a consequence of CCBs, but also to confirm the extent and feasibility of CCBs in the marketplace. This study shows that customers who take part in extra-role behaviors are more likely to continue their relationships with service providers. The study findings address the research gap pertaining to the consequences of CCBs, as

there is a paucity of empirical research on this topic due to the challenges of measuring actual behaviors.

More importantly, the moderating effects of contact frequency and relationship length represent a noteworthy contribution to preexisting theoretical models of CCBs. No research examines how the relationship quantity variables, contact frequency and relationship length, influence relationship quality, such as the effect of customer perceptions on CCBs. Hence, the current study provides interesting findings regarding the moderating role of contact frequency and relationship length on the link between customer perceptions of the organization, CCBs, and future behavioral intentions. Specifically, the positive effect of customer perceived justice on customer affective commitment is stronger when the length of the relationship with the service provider is short than when it is long, whereas the level of contact frequency does not moderate this association between the two constructs. On the other hand, the positive effect of customer-perceived support on customer affective commitment is stronger in high-contact frequency and long-term relationships. Personal delivery factors, such as perceived justice, aroused from a service encounter may therefore have a stronger impact on affective commitment for newer customers because they may be inexperienced or lack information about the service provider. However, in newer relationships, it may be difficult for customers to acquire perceptions of organizational support due to limited interactions with the service provider, as perceptions of support are a function of

cumulative and repeated occurrences or incidents (Shore and Shore, 1995).

Along with this logic, when customers have frequent interactions with their service providers over a long-term period, affective commitment increases their willingness to participate in CCBs. However, if customers have not frequently interacted with a service provider, the effect of affective commitment on CCBs is weaker compared to customers who have high-contact frequency but short-term relationships. As a result, contact frequency may be a more important indicator of relationship quantity than relationship length since frequent service encounters provide more opportunities to participate in CCBs. During these frequent interactions, customer affective commitment can significantly enhance customer attitudes and drive CCBs with a service provider.

Lastly, the findings do not show a difference in the effect of CCBs on intention to continue the relationship between short-term and long-term relationships, but the effect is significantly different between the high-contact and low-contact frequency groups. Interestingly, low-contact frequency had a stronger impact on the association between CCBs and intention to continue the relationship than high-contact frequency. The interaction testing of contact frequency and relationship length, furthermore, shows that customers in short-term relationships have stronger relationship intentions than those in long-term relationships, regardless of the level of contact frequency. According to Dagger et al. (2009), the weight of contact frequency diminishes as relationship length increases because when

customers obtain more experience over time, they tend to weigh early evaluations of the service more heavily and place less emphasis on later experiences (Bolton, 1998). Shedding light on previous findings, this study demonstrates that as relationship length increases, the effect of contact frequency between CCBs and the intention to continue the relationship is attenuated. Thus, this study is the first investigation that provides empirical evidence pertaining to the moderating role of contact frequency and relationship length between consumer attitudes, perceptions, and CCBs.

Managerial Implications

On the basis of the empirical findings, this study suggests a number of important and practical implications. First, it is worthwhile for service organizations to know that customer perceived justice can help firms discover how to support their customers. Overall perceptions of justice can be divided into three components during most service delivery and similar encounters including interactional, procedural, and distributive justice. Thus, service providers need to pay attention to all the phases of consumer interaction that may influence justice perceptions. Second, this study provides marketers with information in that customer perceived justice and support cultivate affective commitment and CCBs, by extension. Because customers' favorable perceptions of a service provider are key to customer relationship marketing, marketers need to educate their employees in providing fair treatments and interpersonal support for customers. Consequentially, frequent customers who participate in CCBs

and are affectively committed may benefit the service provider most over time, as they will likely continue their relationships.

Moreover, this study highlights that the relationship management is crucial since the effect of consumer attitudes and perceptions on CCBs depends on contact frequency and relationship length. Evidently, the customer's "heart" or affective commitment grows fonder over time and through frequent interactions but is tempered by perceived justice and perceived support. Specifically, marketers should acknowledge that customers may develop affective commitment primarily through perceived justice during initial service encounters. Nevertheless, the effect of perceived justice on affective commitment diminishes as the relationship becomes longer. Instead, customers who are in a long-term relationship and with a high-contact relationship tend to focus on perceived support, which may be cumulated through multiple occurrences and transactions, to develop affective commitment. By measuring contact frequency and relationship length for every customer, marketers could dynamically adjust their strategies based on affective commitment and forecast the likelihood of CCBs within segments.

Marketers also need to continually ensure fair treatment, but especially during initial service encounters, if they wish to increase affective commitment and the possibility of CCBs. Employees, then, must fulfill the brand promise and activate it through both their social exchanges and experiences with customers. In the event of a service failure, managers should focus on reiterating

equitable treatment and immediately adhering to the values clearly expressed in their corporate or brand identity to rebuild a history of positive experiences. At the same time, more frequent interactions and longer relationships will additionally require organizational support through ongoing transparency, appreciation and communication with customers to maintain affective commitment and take a constructive approach to service experiences.

In addition, as contact frequency and affective commitment increase, customers are more likely to participate in CCBs and assume the roles of partial employees, as their knowledge, information, and familiarity with service providers deepen over time. Marketers should continually and intimately develop their relationship with customers to inform their business. To enhance affective commitment and encourage CCBs, brands and organizations might consider providing customers with anniversary dates to express appreciation and share with them a history of social exchanges and the relationship age so that they can recognize the accumulation of organizational support and reflect fondly on these positive experiences. In a bricks-and-clicks environment, retailers will especially rely upon in-store services and CCBs through the use of crowdsourcing, maker spaces, and automation. Thus, the current findings suggest that customer perceived support and relationship quantities are essential to produce the affective commitment and citizenship behaviors that service providers will need to remain competitive in the near future. Last but not

least, customers may intend to continue their relationships when they perform CCBs in the early stages of a relationship. It seems that the effect of CCBs may not last for a long time. Thus, marketers should grapple with creating other solutions for building and supporting customer relationships, in conjunction with CCBs.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study is not without limitations. Data were collected from customers within three major service categories to maximize the generalizability of the research findings. However, the service categories within the current study were limited to offline service contexts. Future studies should expand to online and product-oriented industries to further test the veracity of the findings. By focusing on theories of social exchange and psychological contract, this study also defined commitment as an effective response that stems from customer perceived justice and perceived support. Other affective responses related to relationship quality, such as satisfaction, loyalty, engagement, and trust may be tested as mediators to link customer perceived justice and support with participation in CCBs. In empirical studies pertaining to CCBs, very few researchers have investigated or tested for moderators that could influence the links between different types of consumer perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and CCBs. As an important contribution, this study views relationship quantity, contact frequency and relationship length as key moderators because they are conduits for customer relationship management. However, future research can consider as moderators psychographic variables, including subjective knowledge and

personality traits. In addition, cross-cultural values may influence the effect of contact frequency and relationship length on CCBs. For example, collectivist cultures tend to be more receptive to personal factors such as trust and commitment than financial factors such as monetary incentives. Thus, an investigation and comparison of CCBs across different cultures would be potentially interesting and meaningful to the service sector.

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