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The differential treatment of women during service recovery: How perceived social power affects consumers' postfailure compensation

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Abstract Female consumers often experience marketplace discrimination in service encounters. Researchers have examined women's differential treatment in many settings, but they have yet to study how women are treated during service-recovery encounters. We found evidence that male providers discriminated against female consumers during the service-recovery process in three experiments. Specifically, male providers offered less compensation to female consumers who complained after a failure than to male consumers who experienced the same failure. Further, we found that perceptions of consumer social power may explain this effect. We offer suggestions for how firms can identify internal marketplace gender discrimination, as well as how they can prevent and treat this significant problem. We also suggest that managers create anticipatory protocols and scripts and engage employees in both bias and interpersonal accuracy training.

1. Differential treatment during service encounters

In May 2019, African American singer-songwriter SZA tweeted while shopping at Sephora that the store manager had alerted security about her. The tweet drew considerable attention. In response, the cosmetics company temporarily closed in order for its employees to undergo mass education on implicit and explicit bias. As Sephora's press release outlined, the company aspired to create a more inclusive beauty community and workplace, and they expected to cover the meaning of belonging through many different lenses, such as

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gender, race, ethnicity, and abilities, in the employees' hour-long seminar (Bromwich, 2019).

SZA's experience at Sephora is not unique. Many examples of discrimination in the marketplace based on individual differences such as race and gender have drawn national attention. These examples should prompt all managers to reflect on whether their front-facing employees are treating all customers equally across all contexts, and if not, on how they can change the situation. In this article, we focus on gender-based marketplace discrimination during restaurant service recovery (i.e., a service provider's efforts to resolve a problem attributable to a service failure). We describe three studies that provide evidence of this type of discrimination and then outline the ways in which managers can identify and begin to rectify it. Specifically, we offer suggestions that are dependent on the type of service recovery the provider offers—tangible or psychological—in response to both common and uncommon failures.

2. Marketplace gender discrimination

Most managers would find it hard to believe that their own employees could discriminate by gender. However, researchers who have examined gender discrimination in the marketplace have often found that women are treated unfairly. Most of their research has focused on negotiations in which men often are offered more and asked to do less (Ayres & Siegelman, 1995). For example, Ayres and Siegelman's (1995) male and female confederates—both White and Black—used standardized scripts at car dealerships to negotiate the price of a new car. Their results suggested that gender and race influenced the dealers' initial and final offers. Specifically, they offered White males better prices when compared with all others. Before any negotiation took place, the dealers offered White males initial prices that averaged $1,018 over dealer cost, while they offered White females prices $1,127 over cost, Black females prices $1,336 over cost, and Black males prices $1,425 over cost. After negotiations, the initial prices decreased for all customers, but White males received the largest percentage decrease (44.6%), whereas White females received a 41.8% decrease, Black females a 27.1% decrease, and Black males a 14.8% decrease.

The findings are mixed in retail and services settings, but generally, researchers have found that males receive better service than females.[1] For example, in one study researchers asked male and female confederates to approach a salesperson simultaneously in high-, moderate-, and low-priced stores to determine who would be served first. Across 162 observations, men were served first 63% of the time, women were served first 23.5% of the time, and equal service was given 13.5% of the time (Zinkhan & Stoiadin, 1984). In other retail studies, researchers found that females wait longer to receive their orders (Myers et al., 2010), that both male and female salespeople respond more positively to males (Rafaeli, 1989), and that salespeople approach male shoppers more quickly than females (Leigh, Herndon, & Kantak, 2013).

This differential treatment is also evident in healthcare services, in which patients' genders influence physicians' behavior. While some studies show that females sometimes receive more positive service from physicians, such as when females are asked more questions or addressed with more empathy (Hall & Roter, 1998; Stewart, 1984), other studies have found that females are more likely to receive unpleasant treatment. For example, research showed that physicians express more disagreement, speak in a more bored voice (Hall & Roter, 1995), and interrupt female patients more than male patients (Rhoades, McFarland, Finch, & Johnson, 2001).

3. Do service providers discriminate during service recovery?

In line with the aforementioned research, we argue that gender discrimination also occurs during service recovery. Service recovery is a service provider's efforts to resolve a problem attributable to a service failure (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). For example, a waiter may apologize and offer a free dessert to a consumer who did not receive her meal in a timely manner.

The service-recovery literature includes many studies and models that seek to explain how a firm should respond after it fails a consumer. Most of the literature suggests that to improve consumer perceptions and behavior, firms should provide consumers with tangible compensation, such as providing something for free or at a discount, issuing a coupon or free ancillary product (e.g., free dessert), offering store credit, providing an exchange/replacement/reperformance, giving money back, or promising a free upgrade (Conlon & Murray, 1996; Grégoire, Salle, & Tripp, 2015; Halperin, Ho, List, & Muir, 2019; Laufer &

[1] For exceptions, see Wise (1974) and Ainscough and Motley (2000).

Coombs, 2006). Providers may also consider offering psychological compensation, an emotional benefit that often comes as an apology (Roschk & Gelbrich, 2014). Compensation affects perceptions of equity and justice, which inform a consumer's assessment of fairness in a recovery exchange (e.g., Adams, 1965; Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999). Recent research demonstrates that providing compensation is important in both face-to-face contexts and in online contexts, where more and more consumers are choosing to voice complaints (Dens, De Pelsmacker, & Purnawirawan, 2015; Sprout Social, 2017)

Many argue that consumers should receive compensation after a failure, but less clear is whether employees are following this advice and whether gender or other consumer differences affect the extent of the compensation. We argue that service recovery is vulnerable to marketplace discrimination for several reasons. First, due to the idiosyncratic nature of failures, employees are often left to decide how best to resolve service failures rather than relying on the organization's rules to dictate how they should recover. Second, all failures are specific to the consumer(s) involved, making each failure and recovery unique. Third, employees often find service recovery stressful, as it is expected to occur quickly after the failure and while other consumers observe the situation. This stressful situation is especially true in online contexts, where 82% of U.S. adults use online customer ratings or reviews to determine purchase intentions (Pew Research, 2016). In the stressful process of understanding what happened and what the consumer needs, employees may rely on readily accessible information, including gender stereotypes (i.e., the structured sets of beliefs people have about men and women [Ellemers, 2018]), to make quick judgments about consumers and to determine how to behave toward them (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973; Lewicki, 1986; Smith & Zarate, 1992).

For example, at a car dealership, a salesperson's stereotype that males are more knowledgeable than females about cars may be activated as they approach a new male consumer. If the salesperson needs to make a quick judgment, this stereotype may affect his or her behavior. For instance, if the salesperson believes that the consumer is knowledgeable about cars, they may offer a lower price point than if they believe that the consumer is not. This belief about consumer knowledge is not based on evidence gathered from the new male consumer but instead derives from the salesperson's stereotype. Stereotypes about groups (e.g., stereotypes about males) are often learned through experience with members of the groups or through communication about the groups. Stereotypes can be conscious (i.e., when the stereotype holder is aware of their belief) or unconscious, but both kinds have been shown to influence behavior.[2]

Many different gender stereotypes exist, but the stereotype that males are more socially powerful (i.e., have more hierarchical status) than females is most relevant to this article. Gender stereotypes characterize men as having more competence, strength, status, and ability to influence others than women (Ellyson, Dovidio, & Brown, 1992). Status and power are important predictors of helping behavior and preferential treatment (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Paulins, 2005). For example, Dovidio and Gaertner (1983) found that perceptions of females' social power influence the frequency with which they receive help. Consequently, if personnel in charge of service recovery hold traditional stereotypical beliefs about gender and social power (e.g., that males usually have more power than females), their beliefs are likely to influence their willingness to compensate consumers.

4. Evidence of differential treatment: Three experiments

During our research, we spoke with several managers who found it hard to believe that their employees could ever engage in discriminatory behavior. But as we noted earlier, this behavior is often unconscious and occurs when individuals make quick decisions about others. Thus, we conducted three experiments to provide preliminary evidence of gender discrimination in service recovery. We had three goals for our studies:

1. Identify any differential treatment that male and female consumers receive during service recovery;

2. Explore whether perceptions of social power can explain why female consumers receive less compensation during service recovery; and

3. Identify ways to increase gender equality in service recovery.

To address Goal 1, we randomly assigned 164 undergraduate students to a male or female

[2] See Kurdi et al. (2019) for a meta-analysis.

consumer experimental condition. In both conditions, we asked students to take the perspective of a waiter or waitress to whom a consumer is complaining about poor service received at a restaurant in a face-to-face context. In the male scenario, the consumer's name was Bill, and our study used male pronouns throughout. In the female scenario, the consumer's name was Susan, and we used female pronouns throughout. We used scenario-based experiments because we could avoid imposing actual failures on consumers and we could eliminate any memory bias that can arise with recall methodologies (Smith et al., 1999). After reading the scenarios, we asked students how much tangible compensation the consumer deserved on a scale—adapted from Gelbrich, Gäthke, and Grégoire (2015)—with six options for discounts off the bill: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, and 100%. Finally, the participants reported their own genders.

In analyzing the data, we found that male students believed that female consumers deserved less tangible compensation than male consumers did. On average, male students offered females a 30% discount, whereas they offered males a 50% discount for the same complaint. Female participants did not treat the male and female consumers differently, offering around 30% to both (see Figure 1 for a visual representation and Table 1 for a detailed account of our analysis and results.).

In our next study, we addressed Goal 2. We examined whether the discrimination against women during service recovery found in our first study could be explained by the participants' beliefs about female consumers' social power as compared to that of male consumers. We proposed that when participants believe that women have less social power, they will also believe that women deserve less compensation after a service failure. We recruited 206 participants who identified as having worked or as currently working as waiters using Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform (mTurk), a website with a diverse workforce in which researchers can post surveys for workers to complete for monetary rewards.

We randomly assigned participants to the male or female consumer condition used in our previous study. After reading the scenarios, participants reported their proposed consumer tangible compensation as before (a 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, or 100% discount). We also asked participants about their perceptions of the consumer's social power using eight items adapted from Anderson, John, and Keltner's (2012) personal-sense-of-power scale. All items were rated on a scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree: Cronbach's alpha = .89). Example items included "The consumer can get others to listen to what they say," "The consumer has a great deal of power," and "If the consumer wants to, they can make the decisions." Finally, the participants reported their own genders.

Our results replicated our previous study's findings. Male participants believed that female consumers deserved less compensation than males. On average, male participants offered

Figure 1. Study 1: Male participants offer less compensation to female consumers than to male consumers

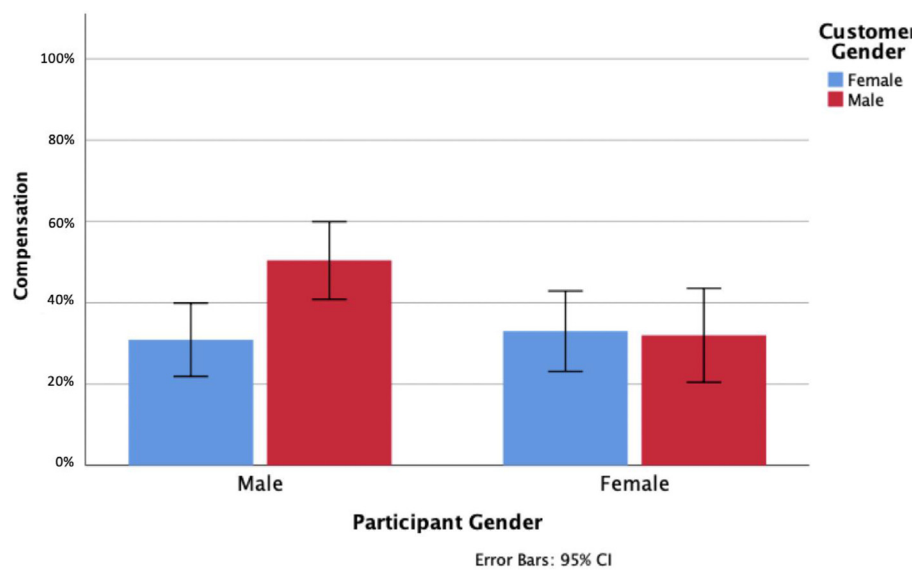


Table 1. Study details

Study	Sample size and characteristics	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Analysis and results
Study 1	164 undergraduate students	Participant gender; complaining consumer gender	Compensation (0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, and 100% discount)	Consumer and participant gender predicting compensation (ANOVA): • No significant main effects were found for participant, $F(1, 163) = 2.66$, $p = .11$, or consumer gender, $F(1, 163) = 3.42$, $p = .07$. • We found a significant consumer by participant gender interaction, $F(1, 163) = 4.20$, $p = .04$; Figure 1. Follow-up contrasts revealed that male participants believed that female consumers deserved less compensation than males, $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 2.55$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 3.52$, $F(1, 163) = 8.98$, $p < .00$, while female participants did not treat the consumers differently $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 2.65$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 2.60$, $F(1, 163) = .02$, $p = .90$.
Study 2	206 individuals recruited through mTurk who identified as having worked as waitstaff	Participant gender; complaining consumer gender	Compensation (0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, and 100% discount); perceptions of social power	Consumer and participant gender predicting compensation (ANOVA): • No significant main effects were found for participant, $F(1, 201) = .006$, $p = .94$, or consumer gender, $F(1, 201) = .76$, $p = .38$. • We found a significant consumer by participant gender interaction $F(1, 201) = 6.19$, $p = .01$; Figure 2. Follow-up contrasts revealed that male participants believed that female consumers deserved less compensation than males $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 2.88$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 3.64$, $F(1, 201) = 4.90$, $p = .03$, while female participants did not treat the consumers differently, $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 3.42$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 3.06$, $F(1, 201) = 1.53$, $p = .22$. Consumer and participant gender predicting social power (ANOVA): • We found a main effect of participant's gender, $M_{FemaleParticipant} = 4.68$, $M_{MaleParticipant} = 4.25$, $F(1, 201) = 12.28$, $p = .001$, such that female participants believed that all consumers (both male and female) had more social power than male participants believed. • We found a main effect of the consumer's gender: Consumers believed male consumers have more social power than female consumers, $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 4.36$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 4.64$; $F(1, 201) = 6.98$, $p = .01$. Planned contrasts revealed that male participants believed that female consumers had less social power than males, $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 3.94$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 4.51$, $F(1, 201) = 8.20$, $p < .005$, while female participants did not report any power differences, $M_{FemaleConsumer} = 4.62$, $M_{MaleConsumer} = 4.75$, $F(1, 201) = .99$, $p = .32$. The omnibus interaction was marginally significant, $F(1, 201) = 2.89$, $p = .09$; Figure 3.

(*continued on next page*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Study	Sample size and characteristics	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Analysis and results
Study 2 (continued)				Does social power mediate the relationship between consumer gender and compensation for male participants? • Hayes and Preacher's (2013) SPSS process macro (Model 4) indicated a nonsignificant direct path between consumer gender and compensation, $b = .49$, $t(85) = 1.42$, $p = .16$. But consumer gender predicted perceptions of social power significantly, $b = .57$, $t(85) = 2.46$, $p = .02$, which influenced compensation directly and significantly, $b = .16$, $t(85) = 2.99$, $p = .00$. • Using 5,000 bootstrap samples, we confirmed an indirect effect of consumer's gender on compensation through social power, $b = .27$, $p = .02$. The 95% confidence interval for this effect was greater than zero [.02, .65].
Study 3	77 males recruited through mTurk who identified as having worked as waiters	Consumer social power	Compensation (0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, and 100% discount); perceptions of social power	Power predicting compensation (ANOVA): • Male participants in the high-power condition believed that the female consumer deserved more compensation ($M = 3.67$) than did the participants in the low-power condition, $M = 2.78$, $F(1,75) = 5.35$, $p = .02$.

female consumers a 35% discount but offered male consumers a 50% discount. Female participants did not treat consumers differently (see Figure 2). In predicting perceptions of social power, we found that male participants believed that female consumers had less social power than males, whereas female participants did not report any differences in perception of social power (see Figure 3).

Our last analysis tested whether perceptions of social power could explain the relationship between consumer gender and compensation. We tested this item with male participants since they exhibited compensation bias in our first two studies. We found that male participants provided female consumers with less compensation because the participants believed that the female consumers have less social power than male consumers do.

In our final study, we addressed Goal 3. If males compensate females less because of their perceived lack of social power, then increasing females' social power should reduce the compensation bias we observed in our first two studies and lead to more gender equality. Giving a person dominance over others can influence perceptions of social power (e.g., Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). We therefore expected that if we conferred more social power on a female by giving her control over others (e.g., by making her a supervisor), or if we conferred less social power on a female by giving others power over her (e.g., by making her a subordinate), we should see a difference in compensation. We tested this idea by providing male participants with information about a female consumer's social power to examine whether powerful females were compensated better than those with less power.

For this experiment, we recruited from mTurk 91 male participants who identified as having worked or as currently working as waiters. We randomly assigned participants to either a high- or low-social-power consumer condition. In both conditions, we asked participants to take the waiter's perspective when a female consumer is complaining about poor service she just received. In the high-social-power condition, participants read about Susan, a female CEO, who visited a restaurant with two of her employees to celebrate a successful quarter. In the low-social-power condition, Susan was at the restaurant with her supervisor and a coworker.

After reading the scenarios, we asked the participants how much tangible compensation the consumer deserved (a 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, or 100% discount) and to report their perceptions of the consumer's social power using the same eight items from the second study.

Our results indicated that participants rated the female consumers in the high-social-power condition as more socially powerful than those in the low-social-power condition. Furthermore, when participants read about a female with high social power (versus one with low social power), they indicated that she deserved more compensation. On average, females with high social power were offered around 50% off, while those with low social

Figure 2. **Study 2: Male participants offer less compensation to female consumers than to male consumers**

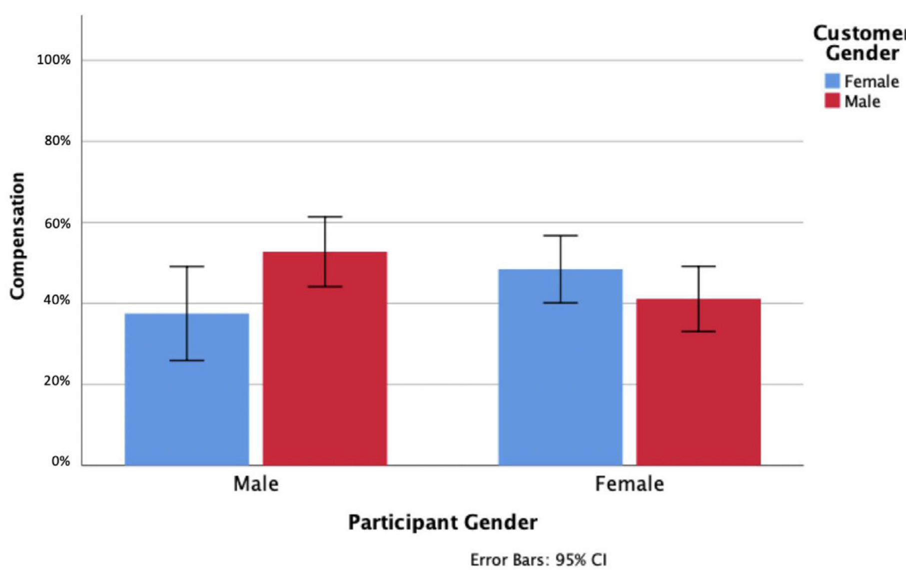
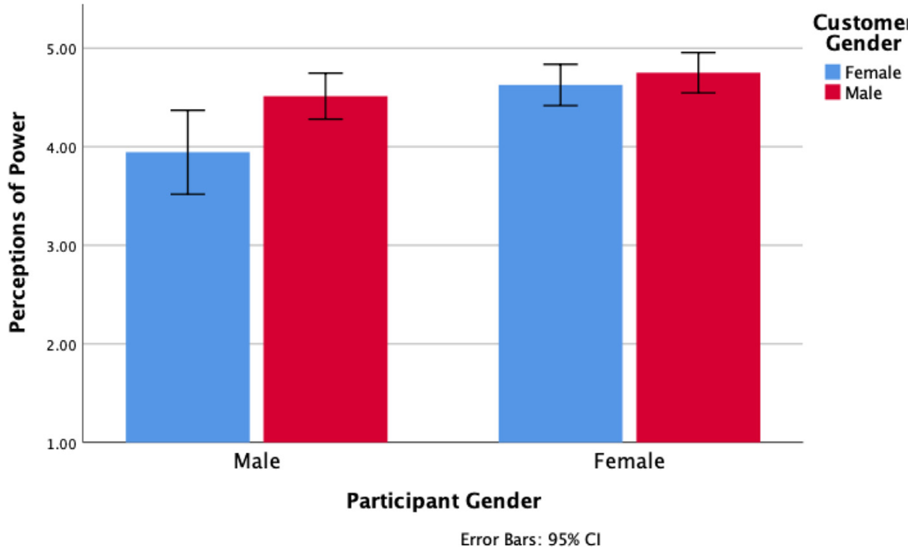


Figure 3. Study 2: Male participants believe female consumers have less power than male consumers



power were offered around 30%. Thus, the perceptions of a female consumer's social power, as well as the amount of her compensation after a service failure, increase in correlation with her ability to control others. Taken together, our three experiments support the following conclusions:

- Male providers offer female consumers less compensation during service recovery because the providers believe that female consumers have less social power than male consumers do.
- When a female consumer is perceived to have more social power, male providers will offer more compensation to her than to a female consumer perceived to have less social power.

5. Steps toward treating female consumers fairly

Our findings are consistent with earlier studies of women's treatment in the marketplace that found that women were often treated less favorably than men and received less help and poorer service from employees (Myers et al., 2010; Rafaeli, 1989; Zinkhan & Stoiadin, 1984). Our results are important because consumers' service experiences influence their perceptions of the service quality overall and whether they will return to that service in the future (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Recovery after a failure is an important aspect of the entire service experience that must be done correctly to retain valuable consumers (Spreng, Harrell, & Mackoy, 1995). Thus, managers must seriously consider how consumers are treated and prioritize identifying and rectifying consumer maltreatment.

5.1. Conduct an internal audit

We recommend that managers begin by conducting an internal bias audit of their organizations to identify whether discrimination is occurring during service recovery (Feldberg & Kim, 2018). While our research focused on offering tangible compensation (i.e., discounts) in a face-to-face recovery context, managers should also consider how their employees offer psychological compensation (Roschk & Gelbrich, 2014). Psychological compensation is achieved by offering an emotional benefit and typically takes the form of an apology, the offering of information, or an employee's taking responsibility for the error (when appropriate).

Bias audits can take many forms. One way to examine discrimination in a face-to-face context is to ask male and female mystery shoppers to approach employees and complain about a service. The mystery shoppers should systematically report on how employees offer tangible compensation (e.g., discounts, vouchers, replacements) and psychological compensation (e.g., apologies, information, or admissions of guilt). Managers should note both the presence of these components and their intensity. When offering an apology, does the provider appear remorseful or show no emotional response?

Figure 4. Managerial strategies for reducing and preventing gender discrimination

Type of Compensation	Failure Type: Common Failure	Failure Type: Uncommon Failure
Tangible	Anticipatory protocols that are based on the failure.	Bias training & Creation of recovery information system.
Psychological	Anticipatory scripts that are based on the failure, but allow for flexibility when offering an expression of empathy.	Bias training & Interpersonal Accuracy training.

Not all complaint and recovery interactions are face-to-face. A 2017 study found that social media has become the second most common channel for consumer complaints to firms, with 47% of respondents reporting that they address service failures online. In the same study, 55% of respondents reported complaining in person, 42% via email, and 35% by phone (Sprout Social, 2017). With this in mind, we recommend managers also conduct audits online. Managers could warn employees that as part of their training, their responses to fake complaints will be assessed and discussed in order to better consumers' experiences. This training may involve emailing complaints to employees and signing the emails with different gender-specific names (e.g., Brad versus Mary). The employees' responses could then be analyzed for the presence of service-recovery components and their evident sincerity. Similarly, a manager could examine how employees respond to online complaints on review sites, such as Yelp or TripAdvisor. The manager could then use the analysis of each employee's answers as a training tool for specific employees.

Ideally, male and female shoppers complaining about the same failures should be offered similar recovery responses. But as we have shown in our studies, the recoveries offered may not be equal. While our work showed that male providers offered females—especially those with low social power—less compensation, managers should also look at whether males with low social power are also discriminated against in both face-to-face and online contexts. They may also opt to investigate whether males receive less optimal recoveries in terms of other recovery components, such as apology or remorse.

5.2. Reduce and prevent discrimination

Managers should be motivated to prevent this behavior in the future whether or not discrimination is found during the bias audit. In Figure 4, we highlight several strategies managers may wish to take in order to improve how consumers are treated during service recovery. Specifically, we highlight how managers can prevent discrimination in response to common and uncommon failures in terms of both tangible and psychological compensation.

5.3. Compensation after common failures

To prevent employees from offering disparate tangible compensations, managers should construct service-recovery protocols that treat all consumers equally. Managers should identify their consumers' most commonly experienced failures and determine specific tangible compensations to suit. For example, Silber, Israeli, Bustin, and Zvi (2009) identified the following nine most common service failures in the restaurant industry: a defect in the food, slow service, out of stock meals, food at the incorrect temperature, cooking food to the wrong degree, inappropriate servers' behavior, wrong orders, billing errors, and food/beverage spillage. Managers should review their own such lists and determine the amount of tangible compensation a consumer should receive for each failure. For example, consumers who experience slow service in a restaurant might receive a free dessert, or management could waive the bill for customers served poorly cooked food.

We offer one modification for the online context. Instead of offering compensation directly and publicly to consumers, providers should push the conversation with the consumer to a more private setting. Once in a private setting (e.g., direct messaging, phone call, face-to-face), the provider can refer to the recovery protocols and provide the appropriate compensation. We make this suggestion in order to avoid a complaint contagion, in which customers who did not experience the original failure read the online reviews and begin posting complaints in an attempt to receive similar compensation.

We offer a similar suggestion for psychological compensation given in response to common failures. Managers should develop scripts for employees to follow based on the given failure. The apologies given may vary in their profuseness based on the severity of the failure and could include an explanation for what happened if the cause is known. The script can be flexible, especially in demonstrating understanding of the consumers' experience, as different consumers may experience different emotions in response to the same failure. For example, the script may instruct providers to identify how the consumer is feeling (e.g., "I understand you are feeling ___") and then to respond with a sympathetic apology (e.g., "I am so sorry"). Flexibility is even more important when responding to online consumers, as any interested parties can view the responses. If the provider's response is identical for all complaints, the response will be perceived as insincere.

To assess whether compensation protocols are common practice, we conducted a survey of 100 mTurk participants who identified as having worked as a manager or as waitstaff at a U.S. restaurant. We asked whether their place of work had specific policies on how to compensate customers when service problems arose. Twenty-seven percent of our respondents indicated that their restaurant had no specific policies, and of those, 20% worked at chain restaurants and 45% at independent restaurants. Overall, these results provide evidence that many U.S. restaurants, especially independent ones, lack specific service-recovery policies. Without a policy to rely on, employees may make biased decisions, and thus gender discrimination may occur.

Once a policy is created, employees should be made aware of the compensation protocols, and those who adhere to these protocols should be rewarded. Furthermore, all employees should be able to provide frequent feedback to management on how consumers respond to the predetermined recoveries so that they can be amended based on consumer satisfaction with the compensation. Thus, managers must establish feedback channels, such as a taskforce that asks employees to help improve existing protocols.

5.4. Compensation after uncommon failures

Preventing and reducing compensation discrimination is much harder for uncommon failures because employees cannot have a set protocol or script to follow. In these situations, employees must think on their feet and respond to the best of their ability. In these cases, our first recommendation is for managers to urge employees to compare the current failure to common failures to search for similar situations. If a similar situation can be identified, the employee should offer the recommended compensation for the similar failure.

Of course, this may not always work, especially for rare or extreme failures, which is why we believe managers should also explore and test bias training that can help employees understand that men and women are equal and therefore deserve equal treatment. For instance, studies have shown that taking the perspective of an out-group (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012), imagining contact with the outgroup (Turner & Crisp, 2010), or thinking of counter-stereotypical examples (Devine et al., 2012) helps to reduce implicit biases, and these are relatively easy interventions that managers can implement.

We also believe that bias training should be run before, rather than in response to, a bias incident. A preventive approach to discrimination can be cost-effective, as it might prevent not just an incident but also a subsequent lawsuit or other costly reparation. In addition, it makes employees aware of implicit biases they may have without realizing it. For instance, predicting one's own implicit personal biases toward various minorities has been linked with increasing one's overall awareness of personal biases (e.g., Hahn & Gawronski, 2019), which could prevent biased behavior in the future. Unfortunately, prevention training is rare, as most trainings occur only after consumers are mistreated and the public responds negatively to this mistreatment.

For tangible compensation, managers should implement a recovery-information system whereby employees can report what failure occurred and how it was compensated. Over time, this system may help to identify the firm's common failures and to provide employees with protocols to fit new situations. Furthermore, this system may help identify any discriminatory behavior early on so that management can step in and train any employee exhibiting this behavior.

For psychological compensation, employees would also benefit from interpersonal-accuracy training that helps improve their ability to recognize the emotions consumers are expressing (Blanch-Hartigan, Andrzejewski, & Hill, 2012). Companies such as Paul Ekman Group offer such trainings online, and consultants can conduct them in person. Through such trainings, employees can better express how the consumer is feeling (e.g., "I understand you are angry") and empathize with the consumer's state.

Our final recommendation for all forms of compensation is that managers encourage employees to provide *equal* service recovery rather than best service recovery, because best may not always be possible (Feldberg & Kim, 2018). Offering a free meal may be ideal in responding to a certain situation, but if the restaurant is not prepared to offer free meals to all consumers in similar situations, then employees should either offer less costly tangible compensation or focus on psychological compensation. This approach will ensure that equal compensation is offered to all rather than ideal compensation being offered to a select few.

6. Conclusions

Our studies offer companies a way to give female consumers appropriate and equitable compensation after service failures. Females receive and accept poorer service than males (Leigh et al., 2013; Myers et al., 2010; Rafaeli, 1989), but this need not be the case. Today's women's rights movement shows that women are taking a stand and demanding equal treatment. For example, the #MeToo movement has opened many doors for women to speak up about inequality and for companies to reassess their own gender biases (Bennett, 2018). Our studies are consistent with this restructuring of acceptable gendered behavior, and they suggest that manipulating social power can change compensatory behavior and create more gender equality in service recovery. In our studies, to manipulate social power, we used verbal cues (e.g., we told participants that Susan was a CEO), but nonverbal cues (e.g., changing Susan's clothing or stance to be more "powerful") can also be used, and they can be deployed more easily in the real world. In other words, one can easily make nonverbal, visible changes to assist in increasing social power and reducing biases without having to shout, "I am the boss!" Ultimately, our most important finding was that companies and service workers can work to achieve gender equality in service recovery.

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