

Value co-creation and employee service behaviours: The moderating role of trust in employee - hotel relationship

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ABSTRACT

Value co-creation (VC) is generally considered as having mutually beneficial implications for all actors involved. Nonetheless, emerging evidence on value co-destruction and its consequences on the wellbeing of co-creating actors implies that narrowing down on specific fallouts of this process is needed for managerial interventions. This paper contributes to the value-co-creation literature by exploring the relationship between customer participation in VC on some difficult to detect employee service behaviors: workaholism and fear-based silence. The extent to which employee trust (TRS) in employee – hotel relationship moderates these relations is assessed. While the findings from 422 frontline employee-customer data within luxury hotels in Ghana support a negative effect of VC on fear-based silence and workaholism, TRS buffered these effects. We recommend that VC in service failure and recovery be approached with tact, compassion, and forgiveness.

1. Introduction

Encouraging customer participation in value co-creation (VC) has always been the strategic appeal of service-oriented firms in their customer-first initiatives (Antwi et al., 2020; Opata et al., 2019). This is useful but not all customers have the requisite knowledge to improve the traditional value embedded in products and services offered by the service provider (Boadi et al., 2020). In other words, some customers can destroy value, influence service failure, and attention to such customers can affect the viability of firms. Nonetheless, the service provider represented by employees mostly assumes responsibility for any service failures (Pacheco et al., 2018). Employees are expected to engage and empower customers to co-create value always especially in service-dominant industries (Ng and Vargo, 2018). In this sense, firms' expectation of employees in prosecuting the customer-first agenda may potentially influence employees to adopt infamous service behaviors in

VC during service failures and recoveries (SFR). Service failure refers to the inability to provide service that a firm has promised either by doing something or not doing anything while service recovery refers to resolving the damage caused by a service failure (Khamitov et al., 2020).

Most studies take the perspective of victimized customers in SFR but less attention has been paid to employees and other observers (Grä@goire & Mattila, 2020; Khamitov et al., 2020; Sharifi et al., 2017). Because of the ubiquity of cameras and the popularity of social media, any service failure can easily become part of a firms' brand in the public domain in a matter of minutes (Zhang et al., 2018; Herhausen et al., 2019; Israeli et al., 2017). Customers who compliment service providers on social media before an encounter with service failure expect a high level of service recovery to be satisfied and remain loyal to service providers (Bozkurt and Gligor, 2021). This can avert the damage the virality of negative social media posts by dissatisfied customers can do to brand nowadays (Carlson et al., 2018). Thus, retaliatory justice is

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more hurtful to firms' bottom line. An employee's keen awareness of this may intentionally and unintentionally influence negative well-being such as job anxiety especially when a service failure occurs due to the (in)actions of the employee (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020; VanVaerenbergh et al., 2019). Accordingly, full-service recovery is not always possible on the part of the employee. For instance, service failures may cause an employee to suffer moral injustice (e.g., racism) or long-term consequences (e.g., loss of job) and experience job anxiety (Khantimirov and Karande, 2018; Yan and Jing, 2021). Service-oriented firms require employees to use available high-performance work systems to avoid service failures and their consequences (Behraves et al., 2019; Mowbray et al., 2021). For instance, employees are expected to be attractive to customers to identify and satisfy customer expectations in the exchange of services (Lanlan et al., 2021; Villi and Koc, 2018). This implies that employees can be blamed for service failures by customers and employers (Lanlan et al., 2021). This can lead to employee workaholism to accomplish work, and fear-based silence to avoid perceived failure from employers. Workaholism represents employees' persistent thoughts about work during and when not working as well as working beyond what is rationally expected of the work despite the possible negative consequences (Clark et al., 2014). On the other hand, fear-based silence refers to the withholding of genuine information for self-protection from people capable of addressing a problem because of fear (Dyne et al., 2003). The interest of this academic work in these employee service behaviors (i.e. workaholism and fear-based silence) is that they are counter-productive, and difficult to identify and deal with. Unlike behaviors, including emotional discharge, lateness, customer-induced incivility, that are easily identified and resolved (Lee et al., 2020; Kim and Qu, 2018; Lee et al., 2011), those treated in this study can go unnoticed for a long time serving as a drain on the firm. This can make employees vulnerable and negatively influence their engagement with customers in VC to sabotage the firm's performance.

Regardless of the above concerns, emphasis on customer participation in VC is not misguided, more so during service failure and recovery. Customer participation in service delivery enables employees to identify the mismatch between customer expectation and experience to expedite service recovery for customers (Mostafa, 2020; Woratschek et al., 2019). Unfortunately, a dearth of studies exists on how customers may reduce employee workload and fear-based silence at work in service failures and recovery with voluntary participation in the VC process. Studies of this nature are pressing and relevant given employers increasing demands and expectations on employees to delight customers and changing patterns in work related to customers that can influence employee workload and fear of failure at work as bemoaned by Balducci et al. (2016). Additionally, the role of organizational resources in the form of employee trust in their relationship with the company as primary support especially in the hospitality industry to resolve work-related issues bordering on employee and customer exchanges has rarely been examined (Shore and Coyle-Shapiro, 2007; Su and Swanson, 2019). This study aimed to advance the literature by exploring the influence of customer participation in VC during service failure and recovery on some employee service behaviors (i.e. workaholism and fear-based silence). In addition, it probes the moderating role of employee trust in an employee-hotel relationship. These objectives are examined with the theoretical foundations of the Service-Dominant Logic (SD-L) and the Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R) (Bakker et al., 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). While the SD-L outlines the benefits of service exchange between customers and employees, the JD-R illustrates the need for companies to balance assigned employee tasks and expectations from customers with requisite resources from the organization to enable employees to accomplish these tasks and meet customers' expectations harmoniously. Using the synergistic complementarity of these theories for organizational success, we developed and tested hypotheses with matched data from front desk employees and customers from luxury hotels in the hospitality context of Ghana. This industry is taking gradual momentum in Ghana. However, the current

and post COVID-19 pandemic impact on the hospitality industry indicates that employee relationships with customers underpinned by employee trust in their hotels can be the key to reviving the industry. Customers, in most cases, are part of the service delivery process and mostly participate in VC in hospitality services (Dayour et al., 2020).

The contribution of this study is four-fold. First, the study draws attention to hard-to-detect behavioral effects (workaholism and fear-based silence) of customer participation in the VC process for managerial interventions to alleviate employees' suffering and customers' dissatisfaction. Second, this study presents trust as a psycho-social resource that motivates employee creativity and innovation to co-create innovative solutions with customers in both online and offline SFR. Third, this study complements the widely used ethical and justice perception theories concerning customers in service failure and recovery (Nadeem et al., 2021; Nikbin et al., 2015) by highlighting the integrative role of JD-R theory and SD-L. Finally, the multi-sourced data from customers and frontline employees for this study provide more robust results as it eliminates common-rater biases that mostly characterize extant studies on the topic.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant literature and develops the hypotheses tested; section 3 reports the specific methods employed to test our hypotheses; section 4 presents the results, and section 5 discusses the results and concludes the paper.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical foundation

2.1.1. Job demands - resources theory

The JD-R theory is based on how job demands and job resources have unique and multiplicative effects on job drain and motivation (Bakker et al., 2014). In simple terms, demand is something that tasks an employee's resources. In the context of this study, job demand refers to the physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects of work, which require sustained physical and/or psychological efforts (i.e., cognitive or emotional efforts) to be related to some physical and/or psychological costs (Antwi et al., 2019; Belle et al., 2021). Agreeably, job demands are not necessarily negative. However, when meeting such demands requires extra efforts that overextend the employee, these demands become stressors related to high costs that elicit unpalatable responses including workaholism and fear-based silence among employees. For example; when there is a mismatch between a customer expectation on received service/product from a hotel, and he/she participates in the service recovery with the hotel. Luxury hotels in particular have established channels and services/products for their employees to recover services for customers (Lee et al., 2011). Potential employee workaholism arises when there is a lack of collaboration between customers and employees, co-workers, and also, system failures that exert pressure on employees to rely on their meager resources to resolve service failures as expected by employers/supervisors and customers (Villi and Koc, 2018; Mowbray et al., 2021). Similarly, fear-based silence can be adopted by employees when they perceive that providing genuine information to colleagues on the occurrence of a service failure can result in the loss of face or potential job loss when this information is passed on to a supervisor to expose their inability to meet customer and company expectations (Yu et al., 2021). The above shows diverse underlying mechanisms where customers may influence employees' negative behaviors due to an imbalance between expected tasks to be accomplished and resources available to be used. One way of gauging if such demanding exchanges are likely to result in employees' unhealthy behaviors is by assessing customers' evaluation after the encounter (Mattila and Heejung, 2008). A customer's positive view indicates a cooperative synergy with an employee, diminishing an employee's need to adopt negative service behaviors.

Further, the comfort and quiet confidence employees have to activate their discretion in reasonableness in the execution of service

recovery may make all the difference in the success of such an undertaking. The trust an employee has in the relationship s/he has with a hotel offers an invaluable job resource, particularly in an event of service failure where service recovery is imminent (Brown et al., 2015). Service usually fails because the established protocols of service delivery, in particular machines, have broken down or failed to deliver (Chen et al., 2020). In such a case, an employee has to rely on their ingenuity and innovative job crafting abilities. However, if an employee has to ask over and again: “what if my manager does not approve of my behavior?” an opportunity for service recovery would be missed. Accordingly, this study defined employee trust in the employee - hotel relationship as the degree to which an employee is comfortable activating his/her discretion in an event of service failure and recovery (see Özen et al., 2014; Su and Swanson, 2019). We contend that the relationships between customer participation in VC and employees’ negative behaviors (fear-based silence and workaholism) that are difficult to observe will be strengthened if an employee’s trust in employee - hotel relationship is strong.

2.1.2. Customer participation in VC in service failure and recovery

Traditionally, firms create value and then propose this value to customers. Based on the SD-L, value is always co-created through the interaction among multiple stakeholders, comprising customers, employees, suppliers, and investors (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Customers through employees influence the service process to enjoy the exchange of service and develop an interpersonal relationship with firms (Cheung and To, 2021; Chan et al., 2010). An employee influences customers’ experience of value comprising physical consumption, thinking about service, dreaming about firms’ offering, and feeling good about something to remain loyal to firms (Amin et al., 2021). This indicates intentional and unintentional customer experience of value. Of relevance to this study is when customers intentionally seek value in products and services during service failure and recovery. This makes customer participation in VC a job demand because it indicates customer evaluation of what they have received from firms and requires improvement. Akin to the meta-analytical results that the concept of VC comprises co-production and value in use dimensions (Ranjan and Read, 2016). Employees exchange competencies with customers to improve value on products and services to impact customers’ experience value. This process enables customers to influence the quality of service received and achieve relational value as well as economic value from products/services (Boadi et al., 2020; Chan et al., 2010). In line with the above, we defined customer participation in value co-creation as the extent to which customers actively collaborate with firms to improve existing solutions or search for new solutions for value in products and services in service failure and recovery (Mostafa, 2020). This definition is suitable in addressing the study objectives because it highlights customer evaluation of value offered by employees and customer willingness to make a demand in the service recovery process to satisfy their expectations.

The theory of service failure identifies two types of failures namely outcome and process failures (Shih-Chieh et al., 2011). While the outcome failure represents what customers receive from the service (e.g., swapping hotel room keys/card), the process failure depicts how services are delivered to customers. The latter encapsulates unavailable service, unreasonably slow service, and other core service failures (e.g., lengthy queues in a theme park, canceled flights, the restaurant meal being cold, or the baggage arriving damaged (Lee et al., 2011). Although service-oriented firms especially those in the hospitality, travel, and tourism industries have established channels for service recovery (Antwi et al., 2020), before resolving service failures, employees’ fake emotions such as displaying smiling faces along with direct eye contact to encourage a positive customer experience of value (Lee et al., 2020). These actions are strains influenced by work on customer-related outcomes (Xu et al., 2020). There are also situations where the customer cannot attribute the dissatisfaction to any factor or specific behavior of

an employee. However, customers evaluate the service experience in a holistic way, such as everything going below their expectations (Mattila and Heejeung, 2008). Although, customers may be more displeased with service failure and recovery by self-serving machines such as a change of hotel room or request for a special meal (Chen et al., 2020). This does not entirely exonerate employees from customer attribution of service failure. Some of these situations may be failures due to employees’ lack of attention to the performance of machines (Castillo et al., 2020). Repetition of these failures potentially leads to customer defection and for this reason, managers do not take a small failure for granted (Sands et al., 2020). This is ingrained in the emotional labor of employees and how they find ways (i.e. workaholism, fear-based silence, and trust in the company) to approach job demands and resources potentially induced by customers and expectations of firms. Therefore, assessing employee negative outcomes from their perspective in service failure and recovery context should be of interest to firms and researchers.

2.2. Setting of hypotheses

2.2.1. Customer participation in VC and employee service behaviours

Workaholism as defined in the introduction of this study depicts the internal desire of employees to work not necessarily because of work demands (Clark et al., 2014). However, it seems difficult to explain workaholism without considering the constant changes in modern work life with workers being increasingly exposed to customer demands for flexibility in service delivery and firms’ interest in employee initiative-taking, and continuous learning to improve planning and decision making (Låstad et al., 2021). In short, conditions that could lead to a lot of investment in work are becoming more common, not just in managerial jobs. In this regard, the influence of situational factors such as the high work demand, job insecurity on the tendency to become a workaholic has not been adequately examined in the literature because of the changing work characteristics (Balducci et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2021). Among four employees, if one is a workaholic, that one is most likely to be in a high service-oriented industry such as hospitality (Sussman, 2012). These industries expect employees to empower customers to co-create value to shape customer perception about firms’ offerings. It follows that when customers co-create value it can potentially increase an employees’ obsession with job-related accomplishment to reduce guilt state of mind for not satisfying customer expectation and to care for the welfare of the public (Brieger et al., 2019). Consequently, an employee may have persistent thoughts about work and free up more time for work than the official schedule (Olugbade and Karatepe, 2019). Thus, workaholics show a drive to work regardless of potential negative effects on themselves and their organizations (Avanzi et al., 2020). This can enable workaholics to attract recognition and rewards for their work.

Based on the above discussion, it can be deduced that customer participation in VC creates job demand as customers seek improvement in the firm’s value proposition from employees to have the best solution to service failures. Demanding and uncooperative customers are more likely to evaluate customer participation in VC as negative, meaning their satisfaction demands may set an employee off to do the most for him or the next customer, leading to thoughts about how to satisfy customers on and off work. However, customer positive evaluation of value proposed by employees suggests the willingness on the part of the customer to engage in reasonable negotiation of value, relieving employees from being sent into an overdrive (workaholism) because of customers being overly demanding. Therefore, whether or not employees prosecuting the customer first agenda can influence workaholic tendencies is tested with the hypothesis below:

H1a. Customer participation in value co-creation will be negatively related to employee workaholism.

On the other hand, this paper is also interested in employees’ fear-based silence at work. For example; employees might fear to express

their disapproval of the procedure used by top management to resolve customer demand for change of hotel room during service recovery. On the flip side, fear of external pressures can motivate employees to improve performance especially when there is perceived supervisor openness (Jain, 2015; Lebel, 2016). Although fear can be a motivation, it is not a typical positive trait in the workplace. Fear usually has far-reaching effects that make workers anxious and uncertain about their present and future jobs (Ryan, 2017; Srivastava et al., 2019).

Business thrives on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is a by-product of customers' appraisal of their experiences, informed by comparing what they have received and what they expected from firms. Customer disconfirmation is high if their appraisal does not balance with expectations (Roggeveen et al., 2012). An employee's mistake in service delivery can result in customer disconfirmation. Managers' attention to small failures especially in service-oriented firms indicates the use of existing policies or the enacting of new rules to cover every situation (Sands et al., 2020). These control mechanisms for every activity may keep employees focused on assigned customer goals. They have to be because if they miss a goal, they are likely not to get collaboration or innovation from any team member who might be experiencing fear (Ryan, 2017). Once the employee makes a mistake, it could be solved by the employee. If the employee cannot solve it, the employee will not be happy and fear-based silence can occur. However, evaluation of customers' participation in VC serves as a critical pointer as to how service recovery proceeded. A positive evaluation indicates cooperative exchanges between customers and employees and, when customer evaluation of their participation in VC is negative, the converse could be true. Thus, customers can provide ideas through their participation in VC to help solve employee mistakes in service delivery (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). This can avert employee fear-based silence since they have successfully recovered value for the customer. This ensures that customers continue to be loyal to a brand regardless of perceived brand transgressions (Kennedy and Guzmán, 2019; Khenfer and Cuny, 2020). Therefore, customers become partners in service recovery to minimize employee feelings of fear-based silence in service failure and this is tested with the hypothesis that:

H1b. Customer participation in value co-creation will be negatively related to employee fear-based silence.

2.2.2. Trust in an employee - hotel relationship as moderator

In organizations, trust entails the expectations of individuals in the network of their relationships and behaviors (Su and Swanson, 2019). Thus, trust in organizational settings is the confidence in the ability of each party and the belief that future actions are constructive and mutually beneficial (Agyare et al., 2019). Trust in an employee-company relationship can influence cooperative work climate to enable both parties to innovate, embrace customer participation in VC as a social process devoid of pessimism, take risks, experiment, and invest in others (Tingko et al., 2021). Customer engagement influences trust, co-creation, and participation attitudes in the exchange of services with the service provider through employees (Casper Ferm and Thachon, 2021). Employees satisfy their psychological needs and well-being when they trust firms fairly compensate efforts (Brown et al., 2015). Trust promotes transparency and openness including communicating mistakes and admitting the consequent learning to motivate employees to engage in co-creation with customers (Xiao et al., 2020; Waseem et al., 2021). When employees' trust in managers decreases it increases their fear-based silence (Özen et al., 2014). Low trust increases stress and emotional exhaustion leading to lower employee well-being (Tetteh et al., 2020). The lower well-being of employees is a potential outcome of workaholism (Andreassen et al., 2012; Balducci et al., 2016). Hence, it can be argued that strong employee trust in hotels is more likely to reduce fear-based silence and minimize the urge to continue to work (workaholism) to avoid negative consequences on their wellbeing.

H2a. Trust moderates the negative relationship between customer

participation in value co-creation and workaholism, such that high levels of trust will strengthen the relationship.

H2b. Trust moderates the negative relationship between customer participation in value co-creation and fear-based silence such that high levels of trust will strengthen the relationship.

2.3. Theoretical model

Fig. 1 presents our proposed conceptual model and hypothesized relationships for this study. This figure outlines the influence of customer participation in VC in service failure and recovery on two employee service behaviors namely workaholism and fear-based silence. Specifically, customer participation in VC will relate negatively to employee workaholism and this relation is strengthened by a high/favorable perception of employee trust in employee-hotel relationships. Similarly, customer participation in VC will relate negatively to employee fear-based silence and this relation will be strengthened by a high/favorable perception of employee trust in the employee-hotel relationship.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design and data collection

This study takes a cross-sectional design approach. The study focused on hotels with at least three (3) stars. A total of 41 hotels were identified in the Ghana Tourism Authority and Ministry of Tourism and Creative Arts database on hotels in Ghana and were contacted (TouringGhana, 2021). However, 26 hotels (representing 63.4%) out of the 41 hotels showed interest in the objectives of the study and cooperated with us for data collection. Consequently, this study sampled frontline employees and customers from these 26 hotels. These hotels operate in four regions in Ghana (i.e Greater Accra, Greater Kumasi, Central and Eastern Regions) that are known for high patronage by tourists and visitors. This sheds light on the different backgrounds of people employees serve in these hotels. These regions are known as the high-demand tourism enclave of Ghana witnessing heavy traffic all year round. Such heavy demands create the potential for SFR and therefore offer a good population to test our theoretical model.

Before data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts from a University in Ghana to assess the items of the constructs. They recommended rewording of questions to be concise and shorter without losing their meaning on respective constructs. Based on this, the

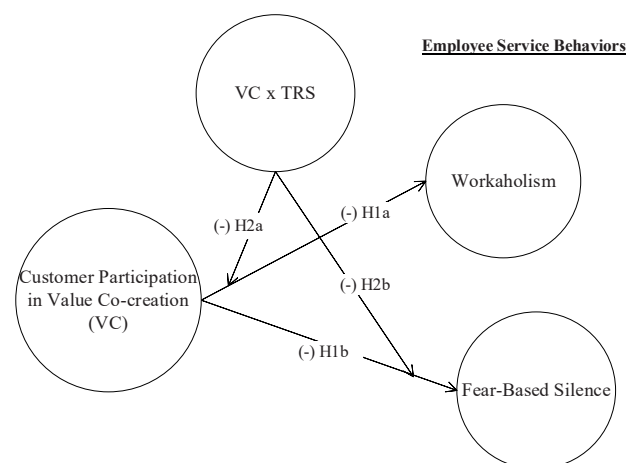


Fig. 1. Proposed Theoretical Model. Note: (-) = Negative Relationship; VC = Customer Participation in Value Co-creation; TRS = Trust in Employee - Hotel Relationship; VC x TRS = Interaction Term of Customer Participation in Value Co - creation and Trust in Employee - Hotel Relationship.

items were edited and one of the experts re-examined the modified items against the recommendations and accepted the changes as accurate and reflective of the experts' opinion. Data collection proceeded using a two-wave method with a one-month interval. Specifically, five teams of trained field assistants who were undergraduate students visited each of the 26 hotels twice with one-month intervals to collect data from customers and frontline employees. These field assistants were assisted by an employee from each hotel who volunteered to help in data collection. The two-wave/time-lagged method of data collection is recommended to minimize common method bias, by ensuring anonymity and avoiding social desirability (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In the first wave of data collection, employees and customers were approached separately after executing and receiving service respectively. The field assistants interacted with customers and employees about customer participation in VC during service failure and recovery to enlighten them on the objectives of the survey. They were assured of anonymity and their voluntary participation in the survey was requested by field assistants. While customers provided answers to their experience on participation in VC based on knowledge of service recovery as a result of service failure and their profiles, employees answered questions on trust in the employee–hotel relationship and their profiles. A total of 552 questionnaires were distributed but 511 were returned representing a 92.5% response rate. An identification code was assigned to each questionnaire to help match customers to employees/departments that served them.

In the second wave (after one month), field assistants revisited the hotels for employees to answer questions on workaholism and fear-based silence based on their experience with service failure and recovery for the customer. In sum, 511 questionnaires were administered but 482 questionnaires were returned representing a 94.3% response rate. The returned questionnaires were reviewed for omissions and incomplete answers to questionnaires resulting in the removal of 60 cases. The final useable sample was 422 matched data comprising 344 customers and 78 frontline employees. These 422 matched data of customers and frontline employees out of 552 questionnaires distributed in the first wave of data collection represents a 76.4% response rate which is above the recommended threshold of $\geq 70\%$ to minimize non-response bias (Martin, 2012). Data collection was between May 2021 and September 2021. Sample distribution of final data in the four regions where the 26 hotels operate shows that Greater Accra had the highest = 39.4%, followed by Greater Kumasi = 27.6%, Central region = 20% and the least was the Eastern Region = 13%. The profile of survey participants is reported in Table 1.

3.2. Measures

Survey participants completed modified questions for customer

Table 1
Survey participants profile (N = 422).

Description		% Customers	% Employees
Gender	Female	66%	51%
	Male	34%	49%
Age	18–25 years	27%	31%
	26–33 years	45%	49%
	34–41 years	14%	16%
	42–49 years	11%	4%
	50 and older	3%	–
Education	Primary school	13%	7%
	High school	26%	19%
	Diploma	51%	72%
	Bachelor's degree	8.2%	2%
	Postgraduate degree	1.8%	–
Work experience	1–5 years	–	81%
	6–10 years	–	17.5%
	Above 10 years	–	1.5%
Number of visits	1–3 times	63%	–
	4–7 times	33.4%	–
	Above 8 times	3.6%	–

participation in VC (VC: Chan et al., 2010; Boadi et al., 2020); Employee fear-based silence (FBS: Srivastava et al., 2019; Boadi et al., 2020); Workaholism (WKH: Andreassen et al., 2012; Brieger et al., 2019); and Trust (TRS: Su and Swanson, 2019). The measurement scales were on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree” for customer participation in VC and employee fear-based silence while workaholism was on 1 = Never to 5 = Always. While the adapted items for customer participation in VC and fear-based silence have been modified and validated by Boadi et al. (2020) in the context of this study, Trust items have been used in the hospitality context with similar characteristics to the current study context (Su and Swanson, 2019). Also, the modified scale of Bergen Work Addiction (BWAS) to measure workaholism has been validated as most reliable in the literature (Andreassen et al., 2012; Brieger et al., 2019). Therefore, the adapted scales were suitable for attaining the objectives of this study. The final measurement items are described below;

Customer participation in VC was measured with five items that encompass the evaluation of customers' participation in VC in service delivery (example item; Customer participation in VC makes the exchange of service with employees enjoyable”. Cronbach Alpha value = .90.

Employee Fear-Based Silence (FBS) was measured with four items. Example items include; “I fear being perceived as a bad employee by customers and my boss because of service failure” and “I fear getting mistreated in the future by supervisors due to how I resolved a service failure for a customer”. The Cronbach Alpha value = .85 for this scale.

Workaholism (WKH) was measured with seven items from the Bergen Work Addiction Scale (BWAS). Example items include; “I work to reduce feelings of guilt and anxiety in service failure and recovery.” and “I think of how I could get more time to catch up with work to avoid service failures leading to dissatisfied customers”. The Cronbach Alpha value = .87 for this scale.

Trust in Employee – Hotel Relationship (TRS) was measured with four items. Example items are; “This hotel treats me fairly and properly”, and “This hotel considers my advice valuable”. The Cronbach Alpha value = .86 for this scale.

3.3. Data analysis

A two-step approach was used for data analysis. First, the measurements' psychometric features were examined with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using IBM SPSS AMOS, version 25, and to attain reliability values (Hair et al., 2014; Arbuckle, 2017). Then possible bias in the data set was statistically assessed with Common Latent Factor (CLF). Second, hypotheses were tested via structural equation modeling and the moderating effects were examined with the mean-centered approach. The confounding effects of socio-demographic of employees (gender, education, work experience, income) were controlled. Prior study of Redondo-Flórez et al. (2020) revealed that these variables can influence stress and assertive levels in terms of how employees perceived customer value participation in VC in service failure and recovery and respond to it with workaholism and fear-based silence Employee's level of assertiveness shows their ability to make legitimate claims for and against customers and supervisors (Ames and Flynn, 2007).

4. Empirical results

4.1. Normality tests

Normality tests for each construct indicated that both absolute values of univariate for skewness and kurtosis were below 2.0 and 3.0 respectively (VC = - 0.832/1.09; FBS = - 0.37/- 0.32; WKH = -1.41/ 2.21; TRS = -2.44/1.08) (Dragan et al., 2009). This shows an acceptable normal distribution of data and satisfies structural equation modeling assumptions (Kline, 1998). Also, construct measurement items

descriptive statistics achieved the recommended threshold ($\leq \pm 2.00$) (Field, 2005), and items normality tests were acceptable as reported in Table 2.

4.2. Measurement model

Standardized factor loadings of measurement items were assessed with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). All items recorded acceptable values $\geq .07$. The acceptable measurement fit indices were: CFI = 0.984, AGFI = 0.911, NFI = 0.953, TLI = 0.981 Chi-square/df (cmin/df) = 1.360, SRMR = 0.05 and RMSEA = 0.039 (Straub et al., 2004). Reliabilities of constructs' items were acceptable with composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach Alpha's (α) above recommended threshold of 0.70 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Additionally, we confirmed no bias in dataset statistically with the Common Latent Factor (CLF). The reliability, validity, factor loadings and CLF output are reported in Table 3.

Table 2
Items' descriptive statistics and normality results (N = 422).

Construct and items' coding	Mean $\pm$ SD	Skewness/Kurtosis
Customer participation in value co-creation....	—	—
VC1: Makes the exchange of service with employees enjoyable.	3.53 $\pm$ 0.86	- 0.73/0.45
VC2: Makes me have a high level of participation in the service process.	3.74 $\pm$ 0.79	- 0.92/1.04
VC3: Enhances my relationship with the service provider through an employee.	3.72 $\pm$ 0.71	- 1.02/1.80
VC4: Makes me involved in deciding how the services should be provided by service providers	3.66 $\pm$ 0.75	- 0.58/1.03
VC5: Helps me to receive interpersonal approval from the service provider.	3.71 $\pm$ 0.88	- 0.91/1.17
Fear-based silence (FBS)	—	—
FBS1: I fear being perceived as a bad employee by customers and my boss because of service failure	3.37 $\pm$ 1.42	- 0.39/- 0.20
FBS2: I fear getting mistreated in the future by supervisors due to how I resolved a service failure for a customer	3.11 $\pm$ 1.69	- 0.22/- 0.81
FBS3: I fear rejection.	3.62 $\pm$ 1.50	- 0.58/- 0.16
FBS4: I fear managers' authority relating to customer service recovery	3.29 $\pm$ 1.48	- 0.32/- 0.11
Workaholism (WKH)	—	—
WKH1: I forgo my time for hobbies and leisure for work relating to customers.	2.99 $\pm$ 0.63	- 0.62/0.47
WKH2: I think of how I could get more time to catch up with work to avoid service failures leading to dissatisfied customers.	2.10 $\pm$ 0.38	- 0.51/0.14
WKH3: I spend more time working than my normal work schedule to find service recovery for potential service failures	2.91 $\pm$ 0.45	1.01/0.89
WKH4: I work to reduce feelings of guilt and anxiety in service failure and recovery.	2.76 $\pm$ 0.51	- 0.35/- 0.23
WKH5: I do not listen to people who tells me to cut down on work.	2.42 $\pm$ 0.74	- 0.61/1.28
WKH6: I enjoy working and become stressed when I'm prevented from working.	2.55 $\pm$ 0.43	- 0.38/0.19
WKH7: I work so much that it has affected my health	2.38 $\pm$ 0.59	- 0.41/0.52
TRUST (TRS)	—	—
TRS1: This hotel treats me fairly and properly.	3.19 $\pm$ 1.29	- 0.85/- 0.18
TRS2: This hotel considers my advice valuable.	3.17 $\pm$ 1.20	- 0.88/1.15
TRS3: This hotel communicates openly and honestly.	3.01 $\pm$ 0.87	- 0.56/0.12
TRS4: This hotel tells all that I want to know.	3.02 $\pm$ 0.77	- 0.61/- 0.03

Note: Customer participation in value cocreation = VC; Fear-based silence = FBS; Workaholism = WKH; Trust in employee - hotel relationship (TRS).

Table 3
Items reliability, validity, and factor loadings.

Construct and items' code	Factor Loading	CLF	α	CR
VC	—	—	—	—
VC1	.74	.022	.90	.88
VC2	.82	.019		
VC3	.75	.013		
VC4	.78	.025		
VC5	.80	.011		
FBS	—	—	—	—
FBS1	.81	.006	.85	.84
FBS2	.73	.017		
FBS3	.70	.012		
FBS4	.75	.089		
WKH	—	—	—	—
WKH1	.79	.018	.87	.89
WKH2	.73	.001		
WKH3	.76	.050		
WKH4	.71	.026		
WKH5	.77	.022		
WKH6	.72	.015		
WKH7	.70	.062		
TRS	—	—	—	—
TRS1	.71	.016	.86	.88
TRS2	.89	.042		
TRS3	.86	.031		
TRS4	.74	.028		

Note: α = Cronbach Alpha; CFA loadings = $p < .001$. Composite Reliability = (CR); CLF = Common Latent Factor (the common method variance effects are below the maximum threshold of 2.00).

4.3. Constructs' correlation and discriminant validity

This study is not affected by multicollinearity since no correlation coefficient above 0.80 was recorded between variables (Lin, 2007), as reported in Table 4. Constructs' discriminant validity was attained with Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) of all variables being lower than Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the square root of AVE for each construct was above correlation coefficients among the constructs (Hair et al., 2014). All AVE values of constructs were above the minimum threshold (0.50), supporting convergent validity. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation reported in Table 5 was below the suggested threshold of 0.90 to confirm discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

4.4. Hypotheses tests

The mean-centered values of trust and customer participation in VC were calculated to attain their interaction variable and coded as VC x TRS. With bootstrapping at 95% confidence interval (CI), and accounting for the confounding effects of survey participant's profiles, the direct and moderation paths were examined via maximum likelihood. The model fit indices were acceptable; CFI = 0.954, AGFI = 0.917, NFI = 0.952, TLI = 0.981 Chi-square/df (cmin/df) = 1.356, SRMR = 0.04 and RMSEA = 0.037. There were no observed significant effects of control variables on dependent variables. We observed a significant negative effect of customer participation in VC on workaholism ($\beta = -0.201$; $p < .001$) and a significant negative influence on fear-based silence ($\beta = -0.171$; $p < .001$). Hence, H1a and H1b are supported. The results are shown in Table 6.

As displayed in Table 4, the moderating effect of trust (VC x TRS) buffered the negative relation between customer participation in VC and employee workaholism as well as fear-based silence ($\beta = -0.255$; $p < .001$; $\beta = -0.301$; $p < .001$). Therefore, H2a and H2b are supported. These results are graphically presented by setting below and above the standard deviation as shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. Overall, the model estimation findings are shown in Fig. 4.

Table 4

Construct descriptive statistics, validity, and inter-construct correlation.

Discriminant validity		Inter-construct correlation							
Constructs	Mean	SD	AVE	MSV	ASV	1	2	3	4
1. VC	3.37	0.78	.61	.026	.019				
2. TRS	3.82	0.94	.65	.116	.061	.112**			
3. FBS	3.65	0.96	.56	.055	.125	-.163**	-.235**		
4. WKH	3.17	0.76	.55	.116	.179	-.138**	-.341**	.212**	

Note: SD = standard deviation; **p < .001, *p < .05.

Table 5

Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT).

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1.VC				
2. TRS	.746			
3.FBS	.797	0.726		
4.WKH	.782	0.712	0.745	

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1. Summary of results

In this study, the results supported a direct significant negative effect of customer participation in VC on employee fear-based silence and workaholism. Also, moderating effects of employee trust in employee – hotel relationship buffered the supported significant negative effects. These results have notable implications for theory and practice as presented below:

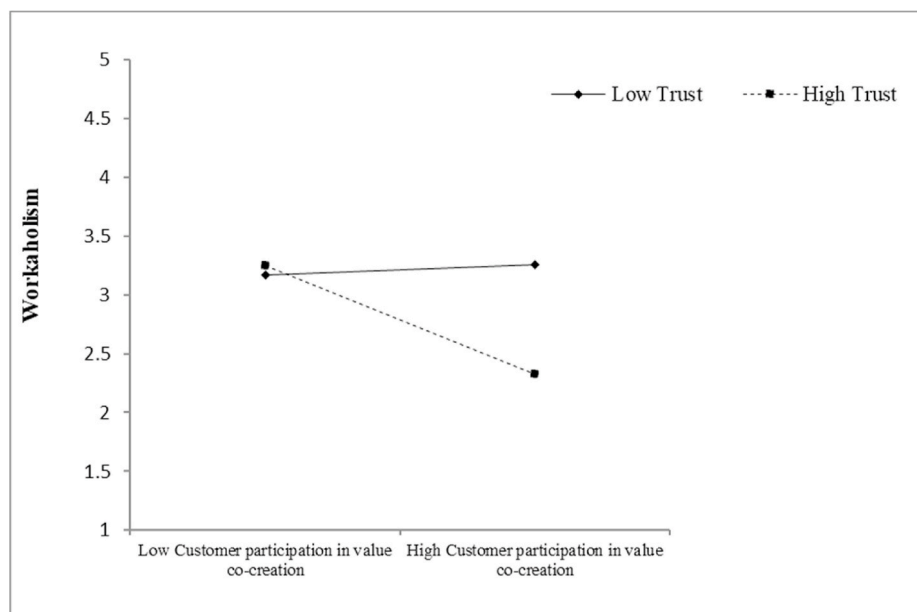
5.2. Theoretical implications

The supported negative result between customer participation in VC and fear-based silence can be interpreted as customers demanding solutions on a mismatch between value offered by employees and value received while collaborating with employees in service recovery. Customers' negative evaluation of value offered by customers and demand for recovery is consistent with the SD-L that value is always co-created through the interaction between the firm and the customer (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Although customers' negative evaluation of what they receive from employees creates a demand for improvement, customers become satisfied when their expectations are met by employees with the recovery process. This changes a customers' negative evaluation to positive to signify a balance between job demands and job resources to ensure harmony in service delivery as espoused by the JD-R theory (Bakker et al., 2014). Thus, customer positive evaluation signals not only positive outcomes for the customer but also suggests employees capacity in meeting customers' demand in the service encounter, thereby reducing employee fear-based silence in service failure and

Table 6

Hypotheses tests estimates.

Direct and moderation effects		BC bootstrapped estimate, 95%	Standardized estimate (β)	Standardized error (SE)	t -value	Remarks
H1a	VC $\rightarrow$ WKH	(.144, .310)	-.201***	.039	-5.15	Supported
H1b	VC $\rightarrow$ FBS	(.106, .129)	-.171***	.024	-7.12	Supported
–	TRS $\rightarrow$ WKH	(.155, .181)	-.213***	.031	-6.87	–
–	TRS $\rightarrow$ FBS	(.103, 0.119)	-.183***	.022	-8.31	–
H2a	VC $\times$ TRS $\rightarrow$ WKH	(.153, .324)	-.255***	.054	-4.72	Supported
H2b	VC $\times$ TRS $\rightarrow$ FBS	(.227, .411)	-.301***	.041	-7.34	Supported

**Fig. 2.** Trust strengthens the negative link between customer participation in value co – creation and employee workaholism.

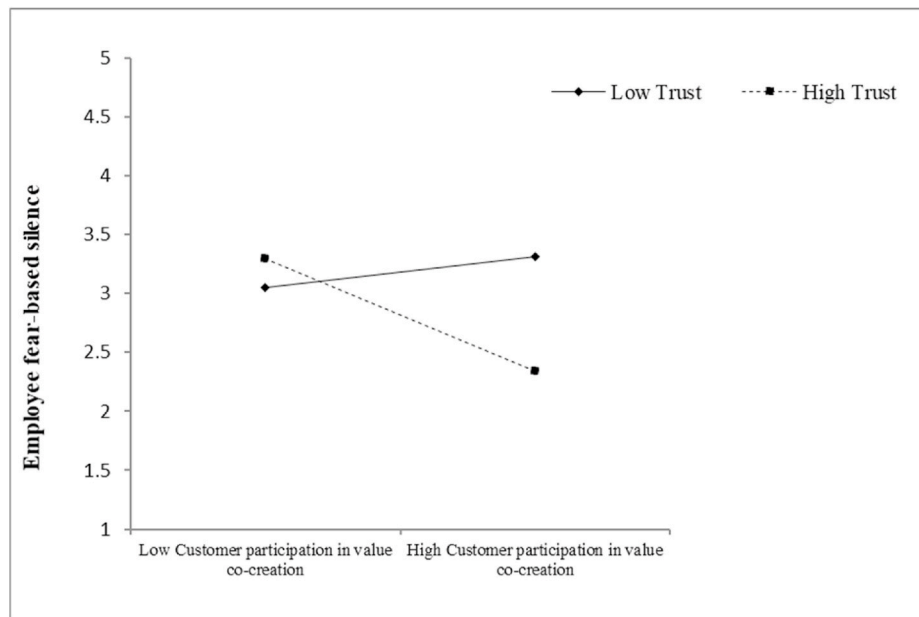


Fig. 3. Trust strengthens the negative link between customer participation in value co - creation and employee fear-based silence.

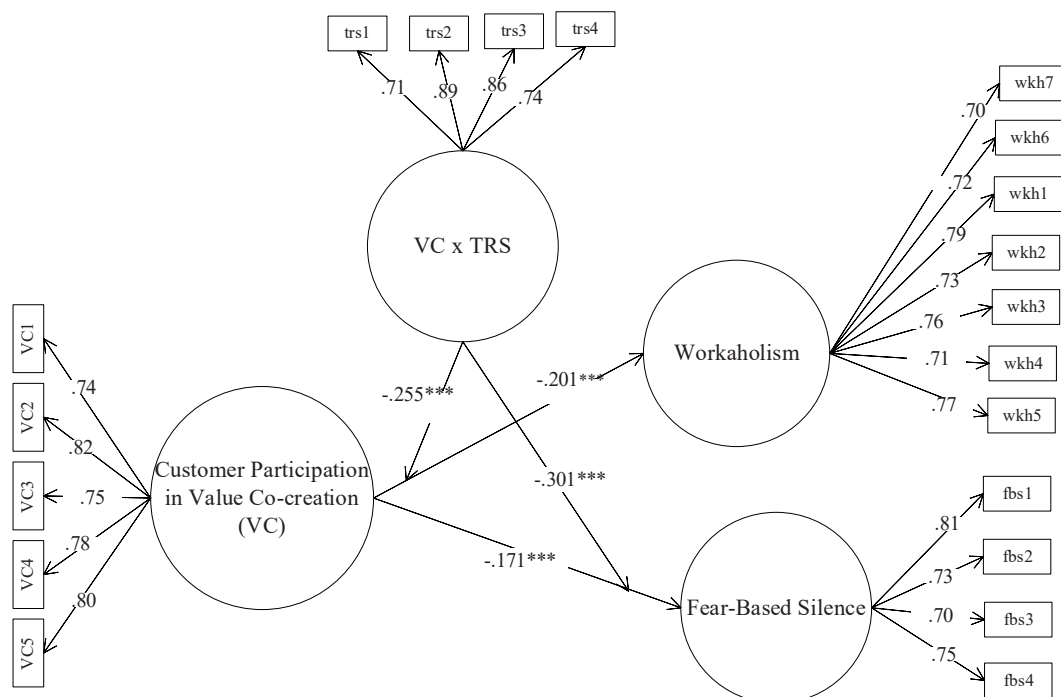


Fig. 4. Estimation Model (–) = Negative Relationship; VC = Customer Participation in Value Co - creation; TRS = Trust in Employee - Hotel Relationship; VC x TRS = Interaction term of Customer Participation in Value Co - creation and Trust in Employee - Hotel Relationship. *** $p < .001$.

recovery (Bagherzadeh et al., 2020; Casper Ferm and Thaichon, 2021). This result contests and supplies an alternative perspective to the perceived detrimental influence of customer role in employees' deviant behaviors toward both customers and co-workers (Kim and Qu, 2018; Violet et al., 2019). Also, this finding can be discussed in line with the findings of Burris et al. (2012) in the restaurant setting that, supervisor-subordinate disagreement on voice can attain negative outcomes when employee over-estimate their voice relative to managers' perspective and a positive outcome can arise when employees under-estimate their upward voice.

The supported negative link between customer participation in VC

and employee workaholism upholds the impact of customer participation in VC in expediting services and fine-tuning the value embedded in products as offered by hotels with valuable insights (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020; Woratschek et al., 2019). Thus, a positive customer evaluation in VC helps employees to evade working excessively beyond normal work schedules and enjoy a work-life balance (Chan et al., 2010; Bakker et al., 2014).

The supported moderating effects of trust in an employee-hotel relationship in the negative relationship between customer participation in VC and employee service behaviors (workaholism and fear-based silence) shows that business in hotels and beyond thrives on healthy

relationships among all levels of employees in a company as well as towards customers in VC. This reduces any form of stress, provides required job resources from the perspectives of JD-R theory, and supports reciprocal relationships in organizational behavior (Waseem et al., 2021). It can be said that employees' positive evaluation of trust in their firms provides them the confidence to rely on their resources to recover service for customers when existing protocols fail. In that, trust will embolden employees to voice the problem without craving for co-worker's protection and/or waiting for managers to detect the offender with available integrated systems in hotels. This saves time and averts delays in customer service recovery. The above indicates the need for equity in the allocation of job resources to internal stakeholders (i.e. employees) and external stakeholders (i.e. customers). An imbalance in favor of external stakeholders is only a public relations gimmick (Opo-ku-Dakwa et al., 2018).

5.3. Practical implications

Our findings present some practical implications for handling customer participation in VC to reduce employee fear-based silence and workaholism that can sabotage firms' strategy on VC.

First, managers should recognize technological advancement in service delivery as an enabler of customer participation in VC but not a panacea for service failures and recoveries. This is embedded in our results in that customers may attribute some service failures to employee mistakes but in reality, it is a system failure. Hotel managers should balance the human factor (i.e. professional capacity building) with a technology-centered approach in service delivery and recovery. This can impact a positive evaluation of customers on service delivery as it influences appropriate service recovery for dissatisfied customers. In this vein, employees would not have to adapt to a fear-based silence and workaholism that affects their wellbeing and sabotages firms' customer-first agenda. The supported negative results between customer participation in VC and fear-based silence and workaholism show that customers collaborating either through machines or face-to-face interactions with employees provides no incentive for employees to worry about having an unpleasant experience, speaking up without being heard, loss of face among co-workers, forgoing hobbies and leisure, and punching the reputation of firms. These outcomes are expected since firms have created opportunities for customers and provided resources for employees in service recovery especially, in situations where the customer is willing to become part of solving a service failure.

Second, firms should be measured in their marketing information in adverts about the value they propose on products/services to attract customers. Customers make demands in VC based on promises made and disconfirmation happens when the actual product consumed compares unfavorably to the value expected. This exerts pressure on employees serving customers to adopt unhealthy behaviors such as fear-based silence and workaholism to avoid confrontation between firms and customers.

Third, the results imply that hotels and other service firms should focus on trust-building which is a strong organizational resource that ensures honesty and openness in communication between subordinate employees and supervisors. In particular, trust facilitates employee perceived fairness in the type of employment such as the transition from contract staff to full time/permanent staff, transparency in communicating work-life and promotion conditions, employee empowerment to be creative, guidelines for resolving grievances, involvement of employee associations/labor unions and many more to prevent employees adverse behaviors (fear-based silence & workaholism). Accordingly, supervisors can regularly utilize covert and overt means, including an anonymous survey on employee views on their trust in the company. This will provide human resource managers and marketing managers the insights they need to take the most pressing actions to make employee resources available and eliminate constraints. Although the above-outlined measures seem directed towards employees, it

encourages healthy employees' engagements with colleagues and supervisors which is transferred to customers (Boadi et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2018).

Finally, service-oriented employees should master self-recovery and self-forgiveness in service failures without expecting external support. This can be achieved when employees endeavor to improve their psychological capital (see Yan et al., 2021). This study slightly highlights the need for employee psychological capital to execute work in situations where even co-workers may not be willing to collaborate to resolve service failures. Hotel staff with high psychological capital can deal with any form of negative customer evaluation in service delivery that can be induced by customer participation in VC during service failure and recovery.

6. Limitations and way forward

Despite the scholarly contribution of this academic work, there are some limitations as with all research. Future studies can examine the inverse relations of constructs in our model. In that, workaholism and fear-based silence could influence customer participation in VC. Second, variables such as psychological capital, organizational support, and high-performing work systems can be introduced into our model with trust to provide varied underlying mechanisms between customer participation in VC and employee service behaviors. Third, the two-wave one-month interval method for data collection minimized potential bias associated with the dataset and strengthens the reliability of this study's results. However, a longer time lag is suggested for future studies for data collection related to the constructs in our model.

Ethical statement

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed consent statement

Informed consent was obtained from all the survey participants involved in the study.

Declaration of competing interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest. Additionally, the funder had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

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