



The Effects of Online Incivility and Consumer-to-Consumer Interactional Justice on Complainants, Observers, and Service Providers During Social Media Service Recovery ☆

Todd J. Bacile ^{a,*} & Jeremy S. Wolter ^b & Alexis M. Allen ^c & Pei Xu ^b

^a Joseph A. Butt, S.J., College of Business, Loyola University New Orleans, New Orleans, LA, USA

^b Harbert College of Business, Auburn University, Auburn, AL, USA

^c Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, USA

Abstract

Using a mixed-methods approach, the current research examines online incivility in relation to service recovery on social media. First, findings from a netnographic investigation suggest consumer-to-consumer (C2C) incivility results in some consumers holding the firm accountable to address uncivil exchanges on a firm-managed communication channel. Based on the netnographic findings, fairness theory, and justice theory, a follow-up experimental study assesses how online incivility negatively affects service recovery outcomes (firm–consumer justice) when a firm chooses (not) to respond to the incivility. Through these two studies, the current paper proposes a new form of justice (C2C interactional justice) and posits that online service recovery extends beyond direct victims of the incivility (first-party justice) to also include observers (third-party justice). This more nuanced view of justice associated with a service recovery is especially significant when considering the traditional relationships of justice with satisfaction, loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and other desirable firm outcomes. For practitioners, this research suggests that firms must manage C2C interactional justice on corporate social media channels for both complainants and observers to avoid reputational damage and a loss of customers.

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Introduction

There are two recent online phenomena whose impact on one another is both unexplored by researchers and problematic for organizations. The first is online incivility, which occurs when rude or offensive comments are made toward an individual via Internet communications (Anderson et al.

2014). According to recent polls, online incivility is on the rise with the majority of Internet users having seen or experienced uncivil online communications (Clay 2013; Pew Research Center 2014). The second phenomenon is the increasing number of complaints made by consumers on corporate social media (CSM) channels (e.g., a firm's Facebook page or official Twitter account) to seek assistance from a company (Baer 2016; Causon 2015). The convergence of rising online incivility and complaining on CSM channels is creating new challenges for firms utilizing these online customer service touchpoints. Namely, the ability of an online audience to view and participate in the complaint handling process (Schaefer and Schamari 2016) also creates an opportunity for uncivil communication from one consumer to another (Suler 2004, 2016).

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: tjbacile@loyno.edu, (T.J. Bacile), jsw0030@auburn.edu, (J.S. Wolter), alexis.allen@uky.edu, (A.M. Allen), pei.xu@auburn.edu. (P. Xu)

Past research considers *other-consumers* in service settings (e.g., Grove and Fisk 1997), such as how one consumer is affected by another's actions. Such examinations focus on general service consumption situations rather than when a service representative is working with a complainant in a service recovery context. Service recovery, synonymous with customer complaint handling, is an integral part of a successful customer service strategy and traditionally framed as a complainant–service provider encounter absent from the participation of other-consumers (Hart, Heskett, and Sasser 1989). The effectiveness of a service recovery is often assessed via the perceptions of justice framework (Blodgett, Granbois, and Walters 1993), where a complainant's perceptions of a service provider's interactional, procedural, and distributive justice are key mediators between a firm's recovery actions and a customer's satisfaction, loyalty, and word of mouth intent (Gelbrich and Roschk 2011; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998). To date, other-consumers' impact on justice perceptions has not been considered, yet we posit it is now relevant due to the increased propensity for online incivility, along with the proliferation of CSM channels that allow a complainant's – and others' – public comments.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine the burgeoning phenomena of other-consumers directing online incivility at complainants during CSM service recovery. The following research question guides our investigation:

How are service recovery perceptions of both complainants and observers impacted when a consumer complains to a firm on its CSM channel and is then met with uncivil responses from other-consumers?

To answer this question, we first consider perceptions of incivility from the perspective of complainants in Study 1, and then from the perspectives of third-party observers and complainants on CSM channels in Study 2. Study 1 uses a qualitative netnographic approach to develop an initial understanding of online incivility during service recovery encounters on CSM channels and the nature of firm involvement in these exchanges. Key findings in Study 1 – the notable unfair interactions between some consumers and the subsequent lack of firm involvement to manage such uncivil exchanges – provide the impetus for Study 2. Specifically, Study 2 suggests the firm is held accountable for not addressing an uncivil perpetrator in the face of consumer-to-consumer (C2C) interactional injustice, which ultimately leads both complainants and third-party observers to form justice perceptions of the provider. In combination, Studies 1 and 2 identify a critical chasm between theory and practice, as companies' unwillingness to address C2C incivility negatively impacts first-party and third-party accounts of service recovery.

For academics and practitioners, the present research extends service recovery theory by highlighting the impact of uncivil other-consumers. The authors introduce C2C interactional justice as an additional fairness consideration to build upon the extant justice framework. Relatedly, we consider the

degree of firm involvement in such exchanges, which significantly impacts perceptions of justice of a service provider's recovery effort. Thus, our research broadens the current consumer–firm measures of justice to include a consumer–consumer measure. In addition, we also account for different perspectives of service recovery via CSM (i.e., third-party perspectives and participants) and suggest that uncivil interactions are problematic for observers. Lastly, our results suggest that service providers must manage these virtual service environments similarly to offline service settings, where consumers have expectations of fair treatment from service providers and other-consumers.

Literature Review

Online Incivility

Information systems research examines online incivility, such as offensive communications, social shaming, cyberbullying, flaming (i.e., expressing hate or hostility), trolling (i.e., purposely posting derogatory messages to generate a response), and other harassing exchanges via the Internet (Ransbotham et al. 2016). Whereas flaming is practiced by a smaller portion of online users (Aiken and Waller 2000; Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur 2010), trolling is practiced by the majority at some point in time due to situational and personal factors (Maher 2016). This aligns with recent findings that incivility is seen or experienced by most online users (Clay 2013; Pew Research Center 2014). Outcomes of incivility may increase anger, hostilities, social isolation, mental distress, and reduce participation in online communities for both the victims and observers of uncivil communications (Anderson et al. 2014; Bauman, Toomey, and Walker 2013; Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur 2010; Ransbotham et al. 2016).

Regarding the cause of online civility, one theoretical perspective posits the relaxing of socially normative expectations and inhibitions typically found within face-to-face interactions (Suler 2004, 2016). This online disinhibition effect postulates that a person directing online incivility toward others may temporarily suspend recognition of what is right versus wrong, which enables him or her to freely communicate uncivilly. Relatedly, people are often fully or partially anonymous when interacting with others online, a phenomenon known as dissociative anonymity (Suler 2004). Resulting from a lack of available social cues and social presence, dissociative anonymity increases the tendency of uncivil, anti-social behavior because of the perceived difficulty of being held accountable for misbehavior (Suler and Phillips 1998). These cyber-psychology conceptualizations are rooted in offline psychology's deindividuation theory (Zimbardo 1969, 2007), which proposes that unaccountability and partial anonymity diminish one's awareness of right versus wrong during in-person face-to-face social interactions and, as a result, increase anti-normative behavior such as incivility (Reicher and Levine 1994; White and Zimbardo 1980).

An additional impetus of online incivility is the very nature of consumers' online complaint posts, as consumers who like a

brand may resist negative information from another consumer complaining about their preferred brand (Ahluwalia 2000; Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, and Unnava 2000). Resistance is a form of motivated skepticism that uses psychological mechanisms to refute information that runs counter to one's opinion (Ditto and Lopez 1992). Such resistance can take the form of scrutinizing the source of conflicting information or questioning the basis of the argument (Ditto et al. 1998; Kunda 1990).

Offline Incivility in Service Encounters

Uncivil behavior is not only limited to the online domain, but also present within general service consumption encounters among multiple consumers. In a service context, consumers who exhibit uncivil behavior toward fellow customers are identified by many names, such as other-consumers (Grove and Fisk 1997), dysfunctional consumers (Harris and Reynolds 2003), problem customers (Bitner, Booms, and Mohr 1994), jaycustomers (Lovelock 1994), and “customers from hell” (Zemke and Anderson 1990, p. 26). Problematic C2C behaviors vary from illegal acts (e.g., assault) to legal, yet norm violating uncivil actions (e.g., using rude language, bullying, and acting confrontationally; Fisk et al. 2010). These behaviors are unfortunate byproducts of traditional service environments, such as airline, retail, or restaurant settings, which often include C2C social interactions within the service atmosphere (Bitner 1992; Brady and Cronin 2001; Langedard et al. 1981; Rosenbaum and Massiah 2007; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003; Verhoef et al. 2009).

Uncivil customer behavior affects consumers, employees, and the firm itself. Consumers who fall victim to or merely witness such behavior experience dissatisfaction with a firm (Grove and Fisk 1997; Reynolds and Harris 2009), lower customer loyalty (Harris and Reynolds 2003), and other negative behavioral, cognitive, and emotional effects (Fisk et al. 2010; Smith, Phillips, and King 2010). Front-line employees who deal with such behavior expend emotional labor, seek isolation from customers, and experience increased anger, stress, and desires for revenge (Reynolds and Harris 2006; Rupp and Spencer 2006).

Ultimately, the threat of detrimental other-consumer behaviors on profitability prompts oversight by service providers to offset some of the aforementioned negative outcomes by managing social interactions (Lovelock 1994; Nicholls 2010; Pranter and Martin 1991). One strategy to manage C2C incivility is that of compatibility management, which is crucial whenever customers are expected to share a service environment and/or have the potential to verbally interact (Martin and Pranter 1989). If one consumer disrupts another's service encounter by violating norms of conduct, compatibility management dictates that a service worker should enact a role similar to a police officer to maintain a functional service setting (Pranter and Martin 1991). In this role a service provider enforces rules and expectations of normative treatment between customers. For example, a service provider tells an uncivil patron to be respectful to others within the service setting that the provider manages. Such an intervening role between

consumers is needed due to a service provider's responsibility to create a positive holistic service experience, including C2C exchanges within a service setting (Fullerton and Punj 2004; Harris, Baron, and Parker 2000). Conversely, a service provider choosing not to manage or address C2C incivility may result in poor customer perceptions of a firm's service climate, which negatively influences service quality and the entire customer experience (Jung, Yoo, and Arnold 2017).

Despite research examining uncivil C2C behavior and how it should be managed during general service encounters, no research investigates C2C incivility during service recovery. The lack of research in this area is perhaps due to the preponderance of service recovery research focusing on in-person contexts, where the complainant–service provider dyad may insulate against interference from other-consumers (e.g., Kelley and Davis 1994; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998).

Service Recovery Through Corporate Social Media

A service recovery is the action a company takes after a customer complains about a product, service, or organizational failure (Grönroos 1988). An effective recovery strategy reflects a business philosophy that places customer satisfaction as a primary goal of a firm (Hart, Heskett, and Sasser 1989). Successful service recoveries are vital to companies due to recovery initiatives having links to important business outcomes, such as word of mouth intent, satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and building strong relationships with customers (Gelbrich and Roschk 2011; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998).

Customer complaints and the corresponding recovery opportunities are now transcending traditional channels (e.g., in-person, telephone, and e-mail) to online channels, such as CSM, where complaints are voiced (Baer 2016). Early research examining online consumer complaints did not consider service recovery to be relevant, with such complaints merely labeled as electronic word-of-mouth between consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Ward and Ostrom 2006). Still, some work has examined how firms should respond to complaints in these situations (Schamari and Schaefer 2015; van Laer and de Ruyter 2010; Van Noort and Willemsen 2012), albeit without a C2C incivility focus.

Yet, social interaction online between multiple consumers is a distinguishing characteristic of CSM service recovery situations versus traditional complaint channels. A complaint made via CSM is a publicly visible customer service encounter, where customers expect a satisfactory service recovery while fellow consumers observe and join in the dialogue (Abney et al. 2017; Baer 2016; Grégoire, Salle, and Tripp 2015). Schaefer and Schamari (2016) illustrate how CSM service recovery enables the online presence of other-consumers to civilly interact with one another, which can influence the satisfaction of a recovery. However, researchers have yet to investigate uncivil C2C interactions during these CSM customer service encounters.

In summary, our literature review identifies both online incivility and service recoveries via CSM channels as increasingly common occurrences on the Internet. Yet, the effects of C2C incivility during service recoveries have not been investigated by researchers. The importance of successful recoveries to companies is vital to customer satisfaction, loyalty, future purchase intent, and other positive outcomes. Any negative event – such as incivility from other-consumers – has the potential to threaten the effectiveness of a recovery, which ultimately may threaten the related desirable outcomes for firms. In line with our research question, the field has never examined how CSM service recovery perceptions may be impacted when a complainant is targeted with online incivility from another consumer, or how firms manage C2C incivility during these recovery opportunities. Given this paucity of research, Study 1 attempts to arrive at a deeper understanding in this area.

Study 1

Method

Netnography (Kozinets 2002) was utilized in Study 1 due to the lack of research on online incivility during service recovery situations on CSM channels. Netnography adapts “traditional, in-person ethnographic research techniques of anthropology to the study of the online cultures and communities formed through computer-mediated communications,” (Kozinets 2006, p. 281). Moreover, netnography examines human social interactions on online forums, blogs, or social media to identify and understand the needs, actions, and reactions in online consumer environments. It is an ideal method to use for under-researched computer-mediated communication concepts because it provides a view into cultural realities of online consumer interactions, where a netnographer's job is to understand how communication is different online versus offline (Kozinets 2015).

Sample

Prior to data collection, the authors spent six months in netnography's entrée stage (Kozinets 2002, 2015), which entailed the examination of message posts on the official Facebook page of one U.S. firm from the retail eating and drinking industry. This type of company was chosen due to high numbers of complaints and service recovery initiatives undertaken by firms in this industry (e.g., Hart, Heskett, and Sasser 1989; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999). In the entrée stage the researchers became familiar with the online environment, subjects of complaints, and language style used. This immersive entrée stage confirmed the CSM page was a viable netnographic data source with high numbers of complaint messages, detailed and descriptively rich messages, and between-member social interactions relevant to our scope (Kozinets 2002).

The data collection stage used publicly viewable messages created by consumers, as well as corresponding responses by

other-consumers and the firm. This data was acquired through Facebook's application programming interface. Python code was written to connect with Facebook's servers to retrieve all messages created on the firm's page over a continuous 30-day period. Messages were captured on an ongoing basis with a prerequisite of being at least 72 hours old to allow time for replies. Numerical identifiers allowed for the identification of the creator of each message and who it was directed toward. The initial data set included 5,746 message posts within 1,410 different message threads, but after an initial review only complaint messages and replies were included. This reduced the data set to 3,014 message posts in 618 different message threads.

Data Analysis

Following established best practices for qualitative coding (see Spiggle 1994; and Strauss and Corbin 1990), the raw data was coded with an inductive approach for category development (Corbin and Strauss 2008) to break down the phenomenon into component parts for understanding in order to then synthesize a narrative for interpretation. First-order codes were applied to the message posts, related first-order codes were grouped into abstract categories, and groups of related categories were then linked to more abstract metacategories. A constant comparative iterative process involved the analysis traveling back and forth between the raw data and the emerging concepts. One author and a graduate student trained in qualitative coding each independently coded the data. Prior to coding any of the data in the final data set, the two coders conducted a series of pilot coding sessions on message posts from the entrée stage. Pilot sessions iterated between joint and independent coding sessions. Codes were compared and differences were discussed until agreed upon. Upon successful conclusion of the pilot coding sessions, both coders independently coded 100% of the message posts in the data set. The initial inter-rater reliability index ($I_r = .87$; Perreault and Leigh 1989) suggested acceptable agreement and reliability, with all coding disagreements discussed and ultimately agreed upon.

Unlike other qualitative methods used in digital communication contexts, such as an online content analysis (McMillan 2000), netnography requires greater researcher participation. Following the recommendation of Kozinets (2015), we kept field notes in the daily analysis that became reflective data. To reach the appropriate depth of netnographic interpretation, Kozinets (2002, p. 64) suggests that, “a time-tested and recommended way to develop this insight is to write reflective field notes.” Similar to other mainstream qualitative interpretive methods (Spiggle 1994), we recorded various observations, situations, questions, contingencies, and our own emotional reactions in our field notes by following Kozinets' (2015) seven interpenetrating intellectual implements. Lastly, our interpretation was aided with the use of metaphors to incorporate understanding between the less familiar domain under investigation and more familiar domains or symbolic meanings (for a detailed overview of the use of metaphors in qualitative interpretation see Spiggle 1994).

Descriptive Results

Before presenting our findings, we first present some descriptive results of the online environment observed. Nearly half (44%) of the message threads during the 30-day period were customer complaints, which illustrates the number of service recovery opportunities made available to the company. Within these recovery opportunities the firm responded 92% of the time in an attempt to resolve the issue. Replies from the firm, often written in various template style messages, typically included a complainant's first name and empathy concerning the issue to convey that the service provider wanted to correct the problem. Notably, C2C incivility was found in 23% of the recovery opportunities. Surprisingly, the firm never addressed (0%) any incivility.

One issue for many qualitative studies is limited sample size, which in the present case is a sample of a single firm. To address this concern, a pilot study utilized quantitative content analysis (Altheide 1987; Krippendorff 1980) of ten different firms' Facebook pages to benchmark the online environment observed in the netnography (see Appendix A for methodology details). The pilot study's results were comparable to the firm observed in Study 1 regarding the frequency of complaints, C2C incivility, and the response rate. Across the ten pilot study firms, 45% of all message threads were complaints, ranging from 22% to 70% by company. Firms' response rate to complaints was 87%, ranging from 70% to 94% by company. Incivility from a consumer toward a complainant occurred in 17% of all ten firms' complaint message threads, ranging from 10% to 27% by company. As with our focal firm in Study 1, the ten firms never addressed (0%) the uncivil attacks from one consumer on a complainant. These results show that the CSM channel observed in Study 1 is similar to many others in regard to the scope of our research. The pilot study's results also highlight these firms' lack of addressing C2C incivility is an occurrence not limited to the focal firm used in the netnographic study.

Findings and Interpretation

The analysis led to many insights to help answer our research question. Several of the communicative acts in response to complainants were identified as being part of an *insolent obstruction culture* within the CSM channel under study. This was a culture of disinhibition through communications directed at complainants from other-consumers. These communications featured personal insults, aggressive taunts, threats, ridicule, sarcasm to belittle or incite anger, confrontational disagreement, minimizing the importance of an issue, casting blame to a complainant, and other rude forms of communication.

Two broad types of uncivil exchanges were identified as parts of this insolent obstruction culture. The first type of incivility was labeled as *complainant disparagement* and was observed in 56% of the uncivil messages. These offensive communications were personal attacks rather than substantive views concerning the subject of a complaint. Note: some

messages contain offensive language, yet it is imperative to show the uncensored communications, as they directly relate to conceptualizations within this study. Here are representative quotes of other-consumers' replies to complainants which illustrated offensive attacks on personality (“Good they're probably sick of having to deal with you and your fuckface attitude”), mere insults (“You're a lunatic AND a serial complainer”), physical appearance (“Take the hint...How bad is it when [the firm] cuts you off? :-”), offensive sarcasm (“#firstworldproblems Does anyone have a spare tampon for David?”), appeals that they were no longer welcome (“You sound hateful and bitter and have nothing else to do in life but complain... Go get food somewhere else”), and comments suggesting a lack of intelligence or logic (“It was obvious but you didn't figure it out. Are you stupid as well?”).

The second type of incivility was labeled as *complaint challenging* and was observed in 74% of uncivil messages. With this type of incivility, a complainant's issue was opposed by others. In these messages, the subject of complaints was rudely or mockingly antagonized by other-consumers' oppositional arguments, often suggesting that the problem was not worthy of a complaint or recovery. Here are representative quotes that challenged the severity of the issue by arguing that the complainant is overreacting (“Some people need to be condescended to. Those who overreact and talk like children fit that bill. You noted one singular - and yes, simple - mistake. So no, it's not an ‘epic fail’”), suggesting the complainant – and not the firm – is at fault (“That ant probably came out of your nasty car. No reason to get so butt hurt over a microscopic creature”), claiming the complainant is verbalizing a non-issue (“Sensitive? Most likely, [the firm] had issues with fraud... Only person here with a problem is you”), or downplaying a complaint through sarcastic magnification (“The nerve of them! I highly suggest calling the doctor and requesting an anti anxiety med...I don't know how you are going to get past this!”). It is worth noting that the two aforementioned types of incivility were often used together, as 30% of the uncivil replies utilized both complainant disparagement and complaint challenging communications (e.g., “You realize they could clean the counter after, right? You sound whiny”).

Shifting the lens to the communications from complainants led us to identify a different type of culture. Consumers complained to the firm to resolve some type of problem they encountered, which we labeled as a *help seeking culture*. Consumers who pursued a recovery viewed the firm's social media channel as a touch-point to receive customer service. These individuals expected assistance regarding a prior service failure in a similar manner to a complaint voiced to a service representative in a physical store or via telephone. Posts representing a help seeking culture exhibited a need for assistance, a desire for problem resolution, and an attempt to reach out to the controlling entity to fix an issue. Comparing the communications observed in the help seeking culture versus those observed in the insolent obstruction culture clearly demarcated opposing objectives of the communicators.

Our interpretation focused on the merger of these two opposing cultures. In effect, we saw these two different worlds

collide which we identified as a *culture clash*. We observed evidence of this culture clash with complainants' negative follow-up replies to complainant disparagement and complaint challenging. Here are representative quotes to show complainants viewed the incivility as unhelpful (“If you have nothing more to offer or at least explain your position please stfu”), offensive (“You made a comment just to be a condescending jerk. Must make you feel big to be rude”), unwanted (“I don't know who you are. Please do not accuse me of being a liar, the Internet should not give you the confidence to cast such labels on strangers... I have no desire to hear from you”), intrusive, (“I also don't really care what you have to say or see. I posted this for [the firm] to see and tell them about my experience I had with their company. You have nothing to do with that at all. So if you could please go back to your life and things that affect you that would be great”), and confrontational (“To say I'd do a shittier job? You don't know me. There is no basis for that...”).

In addition to individual responses, our interpretation of entire message thread conversations provided a deeper understanding of how online incivility is detrimental to complainants and the firm. Many complainants' responses to the incivility illustrated unanticipated intrusion and strong negative emotions that a stranger would treat them rudely when seeking help for a problem. The surprised reaction signaled that the online incivility was unexpected or counter to normative treatment one would assume to receive from others in this social situation. The negative emotions indicated that complainants did not receive the uncivil comments favorably, to the point of responding in an angered, disgusted, anxious, or frustrated manner.

At a more abstract level, a sense of C2C unfairness was noted, whereby an uncivil other-consumer's social interactions directed at a complainant were deemed to be an unnecessary and immoral act. The complainant had already experienced an unfavorable event (i.e., the initial service failure) and during their plea for assistance an uncivil other-consumer decided to disparage them in front of a large public audience. On the one hand, it is possible that such C2C incivility would go unnoticed by a complainant or would be recognized as a form of innocent bantering. On the other hand, it is likely that a complainant would view such treatment as a social injustice, because complainants are hyper-sensitive to how they are treated after experiencing a service failure (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998). Our interpretation of these social exchanges aligned with the latter of the two possibilities. Furthermore, C2C unfairness was perceived by both complainants who were targets of incivility and third-party observers who watched the social interactions unfold. The recognition of C2C unfairness by not only targets of incivility, but also third-party observers underscored the noticeable and anti-normative nature of the social injustice. Fig. 1 provides an exemplary message thread to demonstrate these conversations and our interpretations.

In addition, we interpreted how the responses by complainants to online incivility created potential problems for the company in two ways. First, the negative discussions were akin to pouring gasoline on a fire, because additional negative

information about the initial failure was shared publicly by an increasingly incensed complainant. These conversations often included bouts of back-and-forth dialogue between complainants and uncivil other-consumers, which produced even more negative details about the failure and firm (“Thanks for your condescending comment... Just so you know, [complainant begins a lengthy, defensive diatribe sharing more details about the failure and further criticizing the service provider]”).

Second, the manner in which the service provider chose to act in the face of such incivility appeared to be harmful to the service recovery attempt. Moreover, despite the verbal attacks that were noticeably upsetting, the firm never addressed C2C incivility, even when the company replied within a thread regarding the initial complaint. In other words, complaints on the company's official Facebook page resulted in a 92% response rate by the company, yet the firm never (0%) replied to or addressed any incivility directed to a complainant in these same threads, something that was also identified in the pilot study's findings across ten different firms' CSM channels. The lack of response to the incivility endangered the service recovery attempt because of the perceived accountability of the firm to manage these C2C exchanges. The company was perceived to be accountable because this was a digital customer service environment under the firm's control. Complicating the firm's accountability was the fact that responses from the service provider were often a few hours after a complaint was posted within the different message threads, during which time many consumers often corresponded (e.g., see Fig. 1). In the instances of C2C incivility, before the firm responded within threads there were comments made by complainants and third-party observers that noted the perceived accountability of the service provider to address the incivility. These accountability perceptions were apparent in messages directed at uncivil perpetrators (e.g., “Can't believe that [the firm] is going to let this [incivility] fly! You [directed at the uncivil other-consumer] are going to get it!”), as well as messages from third-party observers directed at complainants as a show of support (e.g., “It's wrong for [the firm] to allow you [the complainant] to be insulted and bullied like this. [The firm] has a responsibility to do something when things get out of hand”). Some even requested for the company to address the incivility (e.g., “Can you [directed at the firm] tell the annoying fat guy above to mind his own business?”).

Unfortunately, the service provider's responses within the message threads ran counter to these accountability expectations. When the firm responded to a complaint – while not making any mention of or not handling the incivility – there was disagreement that the firm did not address rude perpetrators (e.g., “I guess I (wrongly) assumed that a huge national company would monitor their Facebook account”). Upon responding to a complaint, the firm's lack of response to acknowledge or apologize for the incivility was analogous to an elephant in the room type of situation: the uncivil treatment was an obvious problem as perceived by complainants and some third-party observers, yet the firm chose not to do or say anything about it. Some complainants and third-party observers who read the uncivil dialogue found it problematic that a

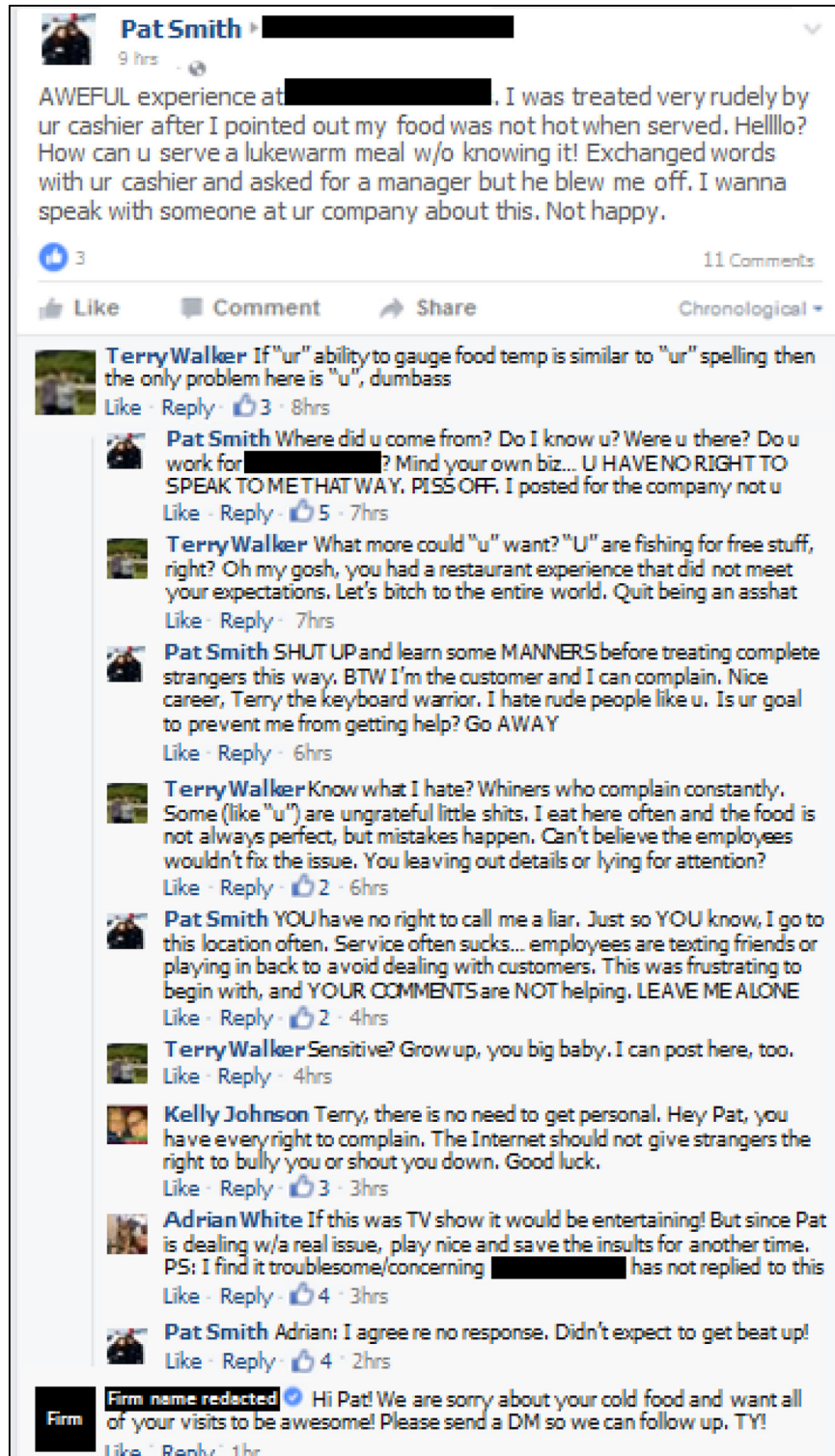


Fig. 1. Example social media thread illustrating C2C incivility. Note: names, images, and conversations in this screenshot have been edited to maintain anonymity and privacy.

customer would be rudely attacked on the company's digital service channel without the firm attempting to address or apologize for the uncivil attacks. The choice by the service provider to turn a blind eye toward the C2C unfairness was interpreted as a form of volitional inaction by the company in a

situation where action was expected to manage its service environment. The firm could not use plausible deniability of being unaware of the uncivil C2C interactions, because the company was responding in these same message threads to address the original complaint. In this way, the firm's volitional

inaction was interpreted as a passive wink-nod response, where failing to address the incivility signaled that the company had viewed the uncivil C2C treatment as acceptable or allowable, without any reprimand from the service provider to uncivil other-consumers.

Discussion

The findings provide some insight into our research question. First, we find evidence that complainants seeking a service recovery on the firm's CSM channel are targets of uncivil communication from other-consumers. In both the pilot study and the netnographic study the firm never addressed any uncivil comments or reprimanded the authors, likely feeding the disinhibition. The findings also highlight the impact of online incivility on service recoveries via CSM. Much like the offline expectations customers have that other-consumers will act civilly in a firm's service environment (Fullerton and Punj 2004), online expectations during the pursuit of customer service via CSM appear to be similar. The uncivil attacks were identified as a form of C2C injustice during the social interactions in the digital service environment. After experiencing such C2C injustice, responses from complainants, third-party observers, and the firm itself helped to tell a compelling story. Similar to offline service theory (Martin and Pranter 1989; Pranter and Martin 1991), there was a perception that the service provider should be held accountable to manage its CSM service environment when problems between consumers surfaced. However, within the CSM channel the firm made decisions when to respond (to complaints) and not respond (to uncivil attacks on complainants). The firm's decision making went against the perceptions for it to be responsible to manage C2C incivility, and thus pointed to a poorly managed complaint handling process (Thibaut and Walker 1975).

An additional insight is the possibility of a double service failure stemming from the unaddressed incivility from other-consumers. Research notes how problem customers (Bitner, Booms, and Mohr 1994) and dysfunctional customer behavior (Harris and Reynolds 2003) can negatively influence the service experience of others. Such acts are referred to as "other-customer failures" (Huang 2008, p. 524), which in the present context may be seen as the second failure a complainant experiences after the original problem. Even if the firm resolved the original issue, the fact that the firm never attempted to address or apologize for the incivility suggests that two failures occurred, which may have resulted in an inequitable outcome.

In sum, our observations in this qualitative inquiry indicate that service recovery opportunities via CSM may be negatively impacted when complainants are targets of online incivility from other-consumers and a service provider does nothing to address it. Therefore, Study 1 provides some answers to the research question. However, the nature of the data prevented a thorough quantitative evaluation of first-party and third-party perceptions of incivility's impact on service recovery, which we seek to address in Study 2.

Study 2

Hypothesis Development

In Study 2, we develop a model of the negative impact of incivility on service recovery for both complainants and third-party observers by drawing on the observations of C2C incivility in Study 1. As depicted in Fig. 2, the model begins after an uncivil interaction occurs, with an evaluation of the fairness of the C2C encounter. We posit that this evaluation is a unique form of interactional justice, which represents a consumer's fairness perception of interpersonal treatment by others (Blodgett, Hill, and Tax 1997). Typically, research focuses on a consumer's justice perceptions of firms or service employees (e.g., Blodgett, Granbois, and Walters 1993), but more recently this view is expanding to consider an employee's perceptions of customer fairness (e.g., Rupp and Spencer 2006). This view can now be expanded even more due to service recovery via CSM as a publicly observable and participative channel where multiple consumers are communicating with each other during the recovery process. Our expanded view is consistent with the origins of interactional justice, which assesses the fairness of interpersonal communication (Bies and Moag 1986). Thus, we define *consumer-to-consumer (C2C) interactional justice* as the degree of fair, courteous, and ethical treatment between consumers. Importantly, the idea of C2C interactional justice is derived from our observations of incivility in Study 1 and from support within dysfunctional customer behavior research suggesting uncivil behavior from a customer is viewed negatively by others (Grove and Fisk 1997; Harris and Reynolds 2003).

We posit that C2C interactional justice is important because a service provider will be held accountable to address a consumer's misbehavior in a virtual service environment under the firm's control. This accountability, what we term *incivility accountability*, can be considered as the extent a consumer perceives the firm to be held responsible to maintain socially normative treatment between consumers. This definition's focus on incivility between consumers stands in contrast to typical accountability of blame definitions which focus on the extent a customer holds a firm accountable for a service failure.

In addition to Study 1's observations of some consumers perceiving the firm to be held accountable for not addressing C2C uncivil communications, fairness theory supports our position with its three-part accountability assessment by using counterfactual thinking (Folger and Cropanzano 2001). Counterfactual thinking literally means thinking about something that did not happen (Roese 1997), and then mentally juxtaposing a comparatively better or worse outcome. Moreover, counterfactual thinking focuses on mental perceptions of behaviors or actions that did not occur (Folger and Cropanzano 2001). Fairness theory's three-part accountability assessment begins, first, when a socially negative event occurs in comparison to a normative frame of reference. Second, the party whose accountability is under assessment must be tied to volitional actions or inactions of normative behavior expectations. Lastly, these actions or inactions must violate generally

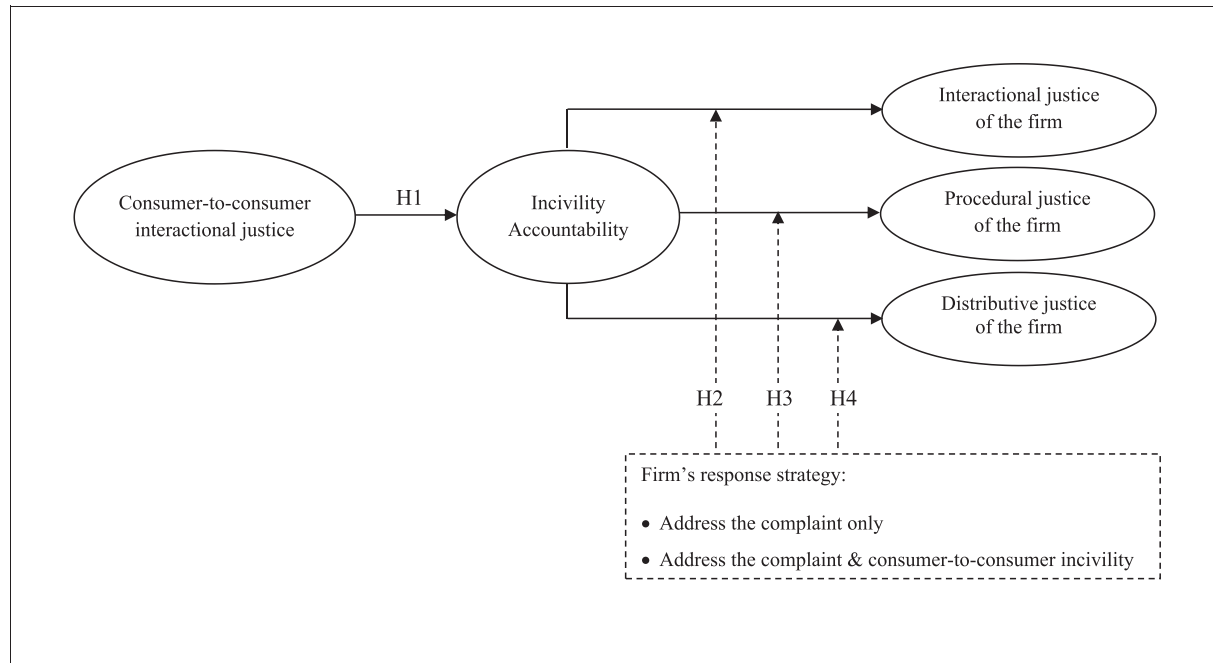


Fig. 2. Research model.

accepted norms and ethical principles of expected interpersonal conduct. In the current context then, a firm is potentially held accountable for an uncivil C2C interaction on social media during a service recovery because 1) a consumer experiences a negative state that 2) a service provider could have promptly addressed to reduce the negative state and help prevent other occurrences, yet chose not to act, and 3) this volitional inaction of the firm violates ethical norms of consumer expectations that a service provider will manage its service environment.

Prior recovery research supports the central role of accountability in the current unfairness context. McColl-Kennedy and Sparks (2003) offer a fairness theory-based model with a service provider's volitional action or inaction as a central tenet linked to accountability. A weak effort by a service provider during a recovery, such as inaction to address a problem, is noticeable by consumers (Mohr and Bitner 1995) and serves as a cue for volitional inaction during a service-related situation (McColl-Kennedy and Sparks 2003). In the context of uncivil other-consumers, a firm not addressing incivility from one consumer toward another results in the firm being held accountable for failing to act in a situation that required action in its service setting (Huang 2008). As Folger, Cropanzano, and Goldman (2005, p. 216) state, "one's sense of fairness is grounded in basic ethical assumptions of normative treatment... injustice, therefore, often involves holding someone accountable for a deliberate transgression of acceptable conduct."

More specific to our context, managerial evidence suggests a CSM channel is a virtual customer service setting under a firm's control (Baer 2016; Blunt and Hill-Wilson 2013). Failure to address online incivility toward a complainant serves as a cue that a service provider is not maintaining expected norms of fair C2C treatment in its service setting (Fullerton and Punj 2004;

Pranter and Martin 1991). Failing to act is also likely to be noticeable, since "expectations regarding interpersonal treatment in the face of a failure are considerably higher than they are in [a] standard service encounter," (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998, p. 72). Thus:

H1. As C2C interactional justice decreases (i.e., becomes less fair), incivility accountability increases.

The final result of consumer incivility, per our model in Fig. 2, is organization-to-consumer justice. These forms of justice, considered as the general evaluative judgment about how a firm treats a complainant (DeWitt, Nguyen, and Marshall 2008), are illustrated on the left side of Fig. 3 as the typically studied form of justice. Comprised of three dimensions – interactional, procedural, and distributive – organizational justice is a central construct to the service recovery process (Blodgett, Hill, and Tax 1997). A recovery that is high in organizational justice increases customer satisfaction, loyalty, purchase intent, and word-of-mouth (Blodgett, Granbois, and Walters 1993; Gelbrich and Roschk 2011; Maxham and Netemeyer 2002; Smith, Bolton, and Wagner 1999; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998).

In our context, we argue that a consumer holding the firm accountable for incivility potentially has a negative influence on perceptions of organization-to-consumer justice. Yet how a company ultimately manages these uncivil exchanges will moderate the accountability incivility → justice relationships. One perspective of interactional justice of a firm refers to "the manner in which people are treated during the conflict resolution process" (Blodgett, Hill, and Tax 1997, p. 189). Consumers have expectations of fair treatment during a recovery (Seiders and Berry 1998), particularly within an

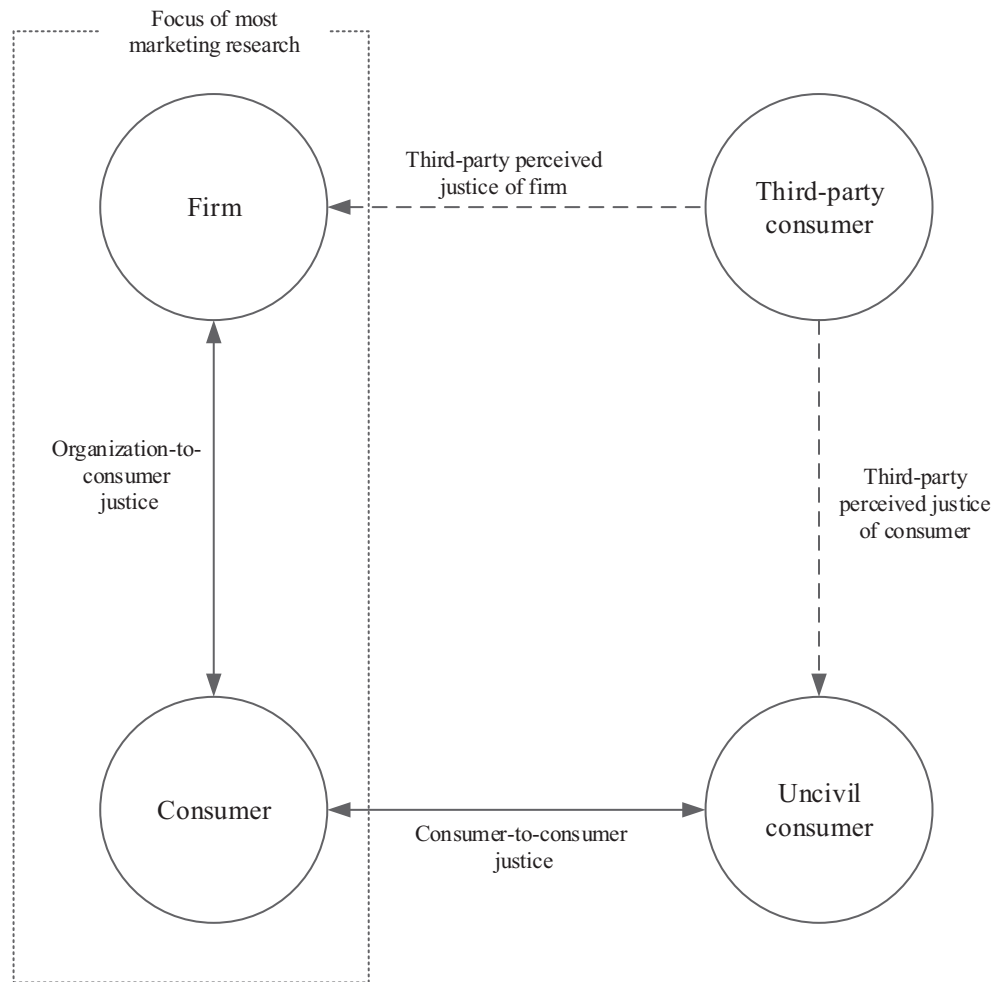


Fig. 3. An expanded view of justice. Note: Solid lines represent interactions. Dashed lines represent observations.

environment a firm makes available for customer–firm interactions (Cook et al. 2002; Lovelock 1994; Pranter and Martin 1991). A consumer targeting a complainant with an uncivil comment, which the firm then ignores, calls into question the fairness of the company's treatment. Study 1's findings suggest as much, but we also draw support for this claim from Bies and Shapiro's (1987) justice-related work. They present a situation of an author targeted by rude comments from a journal's reviewer, and how the Editor handled the commentary. Failure of the person of authority – the Editor – to address the unfair remarks was viewed as a deliberate inaction, and hence, interactional injustice. In contrast, addressing a rude comment with empathy, an apology, or an explanation would be a fairer manner of interpersonal treatment (Bies and Moag 1986). Thus, a firm not addressing an uncivil comment within its CSM channel leads to a negative impact of incivility accountability on interactional justice of a firm. However, addressing the incivility will moderate this relationship by weakening this negative effect (i.e., the firm is perceived as fairer):

H2. Incivility accountability's negative effect on interactional justice of the firm is attenuated when a service provider

addresses online incivility compared to not addressing incivility.

Relatedly, a firm (not) addressing incivility in this context is akin to making a deliberate decision to (not) act in an authority role to resolve conflict. The decisions a firm makes during a recovery and its attempts to manage conflict relate to the overall complaint handling process. Assessments of this process represent procedural justice, or a consumer's fairness perception of decision making, procedures, and conflict resolution used by personnel in a recovery (Bitner, Brown, and Meuter 2000; Blodgett, Granbois, and Walters 1993; Thibaut and Walker 1975). Thus, the incivility accountability a firm incurs should negatively impact evaluations of procedural justice when the incivility has not been addressed. Accordingly and similar to H2's proposed moderation effect, addressing incivility will moderate incivility accountability → procedural justice:

H3. Incivility accountability's negative effect on procedural justice of the firm is attenuated when a service provider addresses online incivility compared to not addressing incivility.

A complainant who suffers embarrassment or a blow to self-esteem during a recovery suffers a social loss (Gelbrich and

Roschk 2011), which is a separate failure from the original problem based on another's misbehavior (Huang 2008). Distributive justice is a consumer's perception of an outcome (Gelbrich and Roschk 2011), which can be an economic benefit (e.g., a refund) or psychological benefit (e.g., an apology; Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998). We posit that a firm addressing a problematic issue, such as incivility, during a recovery is restoring social equity and redistributing esteem (Tax, Brown, and Chandrashekar 1998), which is also known as restoring psychological equity after a person is treated poorly (Walster, Berscheid, and Walster 1973). In this manner, a firm addressing incivility with an empathetic or apologetic response is providing an outcome in the form of psychological equity to this second failure. Yet, failing to address the incivility does not provide an outcome for the second failure, resulting in an inequitable, unfair consequence:

H4. Incivility accountability's negative effect on distributive justice of the firm is attenuated when a service provider addresses online incivility compared to not addressing incivility.

It is important to clarify that the previously posited relationships are not constrained to the victim of the incivility. A unique service recovery characteristic of social media is that because an interactional exchange is viewable by the broader public, third-party passive observers may also form accountability and justice perceptions arising from an uncivil consumer. People are inherently good, which causes them to easily recognize incivility and classify it as nonconformity of fair, expected behavior (Folger, Cropanzano, and Goldman 2005; Smith, Phillips, and King 2010). We also propose that observers will hold the firm accountable due to expectations of fair C2C treatment in a firm's service setting (Fullerton and Punj 2004) and the belief a service provider should intervene when consumers misbehave (Pranter and Martin 1991).

In addition, employee-to-employee incivility research posits that consumer observers are likely to deem observed incivility to be, "unpleasant (negative) and inconsistent with the goal of good customer service," (Porath, MacInnis, and Folkes 2010, p. 293). In an employee context, third-party consumer observers who witness incivility among employees tend to make negative generalizations of the firm itself (Porath, MacInnis, and Folkes 2010) and are likely to form fairness judgments of the organization due to its violation of deontic or moral expectations (Folger, Cropanzano, and Goldman 2005; Porath, MacInnis, and Folkes 2011). These proposed relationships are illustrated at the bottom, right, and top of Fig. 3, which highlights the uniqueness of our work. Therefore, we posit:

H5. All relationships in the research model will hold from a complainant's (i.e., first-party) and observer's (i.e., third-party) perspective of C2C incivility.

Method

To evaluate the perspectives of a first-party complainant and a third-party observer, two separate samples were collected

with an online survey using a descriptive scenario. Scenario-based failure studies are common to avoid ethical and cost considerations of a real-life failure experiment (McCullough, Berry, and Yadav 2000). Each scenario introduced a situation of a fictitious restaurant serving poorly prepared food. The complainant was unable to resolve the failure at the restaurant and subsequently chose to complain to the company via its official Facebook page. Subjects in the first-party sample were asked to imagine the situation happened to them, while subjects in the third-party sample were asked to imagine the situation happened to another customer. An image of the restaurant's official Facebook page and the complaint was shown to each subject, with the verbiage kept constant between the samples other than the name of the person posting the complaint (see Appendix B for details). A single reply from an uncivil other-consumer to the complaint used a combination of complainant disparagement and complaint challenging language similar to replies found in Study 1. Subjects read the complaint, other-consumer's response, and answered items for the C2C interactional justice and incivility accountability constructs. Our approach to measure incivility accountability aligned with fairness theory's counterfactual thinking, in that we asked subjects about something that did not happen and was contrary to the dialogue they were exposed to. To avoid a potential confound, a separate test established that incivility accountability was present in the CSM context, even when counterfactual questioning was not used. This gave us confidence that respondents were not led to believe incivility accountability was present due to how a survey item was worded.¹

Subjects then were asked to imagine they returned to the firm's Facebook page later and viewed the same message thread. Each participant viewed one of two randomly presented screenshot images that depicted the same initial complaint and response from the other-consumer, with one of two possible responses from the company: (1) a reply from the firm to address the complaint only or (2) a reply from the firm to address both the complaint and the uncivil comment (see Appendix B). After viewing the stimuli subjects completed manipulation checks, items for the organizational justice constructs, and demographics. A total of 270 and 365 consumer respondents from Amazon's Mechanical Turk panel completed the survey for the first-party complainant and third-party observer perspectives, respectively. We removed 14 respondents and 18 respondents, respectively, for failing quality checks within the survey, which produced a final sample size of 256 and 347 (M age = 37^{Complainant}, 33^{Observer};

¹ A separate test used two different measure formats with different wording to assess incivility accountability. Subjects recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk ($n = 100$) read the identical scenario and stimulus of an uncivil exchange between a complainant and other-consumer. The first measure asked subjects to assign 100 points across four parties (the complaining consumer, the uncivil consumer, the company, and Facebook) representing the degree of responsibility for the exchange. A second measure asked, "How accountable is the company to address the comment from the other-consumer?," using a slider bar on a 100-point scale. The results showed evidence that the company is believed to be held accountable to address consumer-to-consumer incivility. We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this additional evidence.

M income = \$54K^{Complainant}, \$45K^{Observer}; 52% female-Complainant & Observer; visit brands' Facebook pages: 91% Complainant, 92%^{Observer}).

Measures

A C2C interactional justice measure did not exist, so multi-stage pre-testing was undertaken to identify suitable language for these items. Following the recommendations to use insightful and stimulating examples (Churchill 1979), instances of CSM complaints with uncivil responses were shown to 106 consumer respondents via Amazon's Mechanical Turk panel. Participants were asked to offer any thoughts or reactions to the dialogue. Their responses formed three related themes around: 1) the discourteous and rude language used, 2) the improper and norm-violating nature of the interjections, and 3) the unfair treatment of the complainant.

We next examined items from several existing interactional justice scales and identified significant overlap between the scale items and our three identified themes. Adapting existing scale items by adjusting the source of unfairness in different contexts is common practice. For example, Rupp and Spencer (2006) and Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) adapted extant interactional justice measures by changing the source to capture an employee's assessment of a customer's fairness. Consistent with this approach, we identified a four-item interactional justice scale used by Voorhees and Brady (2005) with item wordings that overlapped well with the themes we identified. We adapted items by changing the source of treatment under evaluation from a service provider to a consumer and then assessed the psychometric quality of the items with an exploratory factor analysis using one sample comprised of students and another sample comprised of non-students from a Mechanical Turk panel. A single factor resulted based on an eigenvalue greater than 1 decision criterion. Furthermore, an additional exploratory factor analysis with a separate Mechanical Turk sample included the four items for the proposed C2C justice construct and all of the items associated with the other three justice constructs. Items for the C2C justice construct loaded highly on their own construct (.4 > factor loading > .9), did not cross load on other factors (<.4), and comprised a unique factor with no cross loadings from items of the other justices (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003).

The results of the pre-tests supported the use of the adapted items for the C2C interactional justice construct, with minor wording changes between first-party and third-party perspectives (e.g., "I was treated fairly" versus "The complainant was treated fairly") for each sample. Other constructs in the model also adapted existing measures to align with the first-party or third-party sample. Four items were adapted from an interpersonal blame scale (Rayburn, Mendoza, and Davidson 2003) that assessed one's accountability due to abusive behavior and items for the three justice perceptions of a firm were adapted from Voorhees and Brady (2005). All measures used seven-point Likert scales with extreme bi-polar anchors or semantic differentials. Table 1 provides the wording and statistical estimates for all items.

Data Analysis and Results

Structural equation modeling (SEM) assessed the psychometric properties, model fit, and H1–H5. A strength of using SEM with experimental data is its control for random and correlated measurement error is better than other methods (Bagozzi and Yi 2012; Russell et al. 1998). Also, using experimental data with SEM enables the assessment of "entire systems of conceptual relationships that better represent the complex environments," of reality (MacKenzie 2001, p. 159).

Prior to assessing the model, a marker variable gauged the impact of common method bias. A theoretically unrelated single-item measure's two lowest correlations in the complainant sample and observer sample fell below $r = .01$. We evaluated method bias with the marker variable assessment technique (Lindell and Whitney 2001) to remove the second-lowest marker's correlated value to create a discounted matrix of correlations for each sample. The significance and signs for all discounted correlations were unchanged, suggesting that method bias does not appear to pose a significant threat.

A manipulation check of the firm's response used in the two subject groups (group 1: firm addresses only the complaint, versus group 2: firm addresses both the complaint and other-consumer's incivility) assessed the experimental manipulation in each sample. Subjects who viewed the firm's response strategy of addressing both the complaint and incivility strongly agreed ($F(1,254) = 1,032.37, p < .001^{\text{Complainant}}$ and $F(1,345) = 925.73, p < .001^{\text{Observer}}$) that the firm addressed both consumers ($M = 6.35^{\text{Complainant}}, SD = 0.92$ and $M = 6.31^{\text{Observer}}, SD = 1.24$) compared to subjects who viewed the response that only addressed the complainant ($M = 1.87^{\text{Complainant}}, SD = 1.28$ and $M = 1.76^{\text{Observer}}, SD = 1.53$). Although incivility was not manipulated, a single measure on a seven-point scale ("The fellow consumer's response to 'your complaint'/'the complainant' was disrespectful"; strongly disagree/agree) supported pre-test results showing that subjects in both samples viewed the other-consumer's response as uncivil ($M = 6.41^{\text{Complainant}}, SD = 0.98$ and $M = 6.03^{\text{Observer}}, SD = 1.23$). Lastly, an adapted three-item control scale (Thomas, Clark, and Gioia 1993) using a seven-point scale confirmed that subjects believed the service provider had sufficient control in the CSM channel ($M = 5.65^{\text{Complainant}}, SD = 1.12$ and $M = 5.82^{\text{Observer}}, SD = 0.98$) to address the incivility.

A confirmatory factor analysis assessed the psychometric properties of the constructs. Each item was allowed to load on one factor and could not cross-load on other factors. The results show the measurement model fit the data well for both samples, per the fit indices listed at the bottom of Table 2. In each sample all measures in the analysis were assessed to be reliable, with strong construct reliability estimates. All items loaded strongly and significantly ($p < .001$) on their respective factors. Convergent validity was established with each latent variable's AVE exceeding .50 (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Discriminant validity was met with the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeding the correlation between other constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Table 2 lists correlations, means, AVE, and reliability in each sample.

Table 1
Scales and items used in Study 2.

Construct	Items	Standardized loadings
Consumer-to-consumer justice (CR = .87/.89)	interactional During this complaining episode, the fellow consumer showed a real interest in trying to be fair to (me/the complaining consumer).	.94/.85
	During this complaining episode, the fellow consumer treated (me/the complaining consumer) in a courteous manner.	.79/.85
	The fellow consumer was ethical during the encounter.	.71/.66
	(I/The complaining consumer) was treated fairly by the fellow consumer during the interactions in this encounter.	.70/.88
Incivility accountability (CR = .89/.89)	Regarding the company not managing or addressing the comments from the fellow consumer, I believe this firm is...	
	– Extremely Blameless/Extremely Blameworthy	.86/.91
	– Extremely Faultless/Extremely At Fault	.84/.90
	– Definitely Not Responsible/Definitely Responsible	.78/.66
Interactional justice of the firm (CR = .94/.93)	– Extremely Conscientious/Extremely Careless	.79/.79
	During this complaining episode, the company showed a real interest in trying to be fair to (me/the complaining consumer).	.89/.84
	During this complaining episode, the company treated (me/the complaining consumer) in a courteous manner.	.89/.89
	The company was ethical during the encounter.	.87/.85
Procedural justice of the firm (CR = .94/.95)	(I/The complaining consumer) was treated fairly by the company during the interactions in this encounter.	.94/.91
	The company has fair policies and practices for dealing with (me/customers).	.91/.91
	With respect to policies and procedures, the company handled this encounter fairly (for me).	.93/.90
	The response process by the company was fair (to me).	.87/.92
Distributive justice of the firm (CR = .94/.93)	Overall, the procedures followed by the company or its employees were fair (for me).	.88/.93
	Assume that the company eventually reimbursed (you/the complaining consumer) the exact cost (\$10) of the product that the complaint was about. Please answer the following:	
	(My/The) outcome received was fair.	.96/.95
	The company's efforts resulted in a positive outcome for (me/the complaining consumer).	.85/.80
	The final outcome (I) received from the company was fair, given the time and hassle.	.92/.94

Note: First value listed in a pair or first text phrase listed within parentheses corresponds to the complainants' first-party sample. Second value listed in a pair or second text phrase within parentheses corresponds to observers' third-party sample.

The structural model fit the data well for both the complainant and observer samples, per the fit indices listed at the bottom of Fig. 4. Similar to other studies that model

multiple justice dimensions as endogenous constructs without direct paths to each other (Gelbrich and Roschke 2011; Wood, Braeken, and Niven 2012), the error terms were correlated for

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, correlations, reliability estimates, and CFA results for Study 2.

Construct	Range	Mean	SD	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5
1. C2C interactional justice	1–7	1.55/1.94	0.87/1.05	.63/.67	.87/.89	.79/.82	–.22***	–.14*	.12*	.18**
2. Incivility accountability	1–7	4.91/4.94	1.32/1.12	.67/.67	.89/.89	–.23**	.82/.82	–.12*	–.23***	–.26***
3. Interactional justice of firm	1–7	5.01/5.80	1.41/1.09	.81/.76	.94/.93	–.14*	–.10	.90/.87	.49***	.25***
4. Procedural justice of firm	1–7	4.11/4.81	1.47/1.21	.81/.83	.94/.95	.17*	–.18**	.52***	.90/.91	.79***
5. Distributive justice of firm	1–7	4.09/4.42	1.59/1.56	.83/.80	.94/.93	.12	–.12	.35***	.74***	.91/.89

Notes:

- > Non-italicized plain font statistics and correlations below the diagonal are from the complainants' first-party sample. All italicized font statistics and correlations above the diagonal are from the observers' third-party sample; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.
- > All constructs measured on seven-point scales; C2C = customer to customer; SD = standard deviation; AVE = average variance extracted; CR = construct reliability. The square root of the average variance extracted for each construct is in **bold** on the diagonal of the correlation matrix.
- > CFA results of first-party complainant sample (n = 256): $\chi^2 = 328.95$, $df = 142$, $\chi^2/df = 2.32$; CFI = .95; TLI = .95; SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .07 (90% CI: .06–.08).
- > CFA results of third-party observer sample (n = 347): $\chi^2 = 288.76$, $df = 142$, $\chi^2/df = 2.03$; CFI = .97; TLI = .97; SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .06 (90% CI: .05–.06).

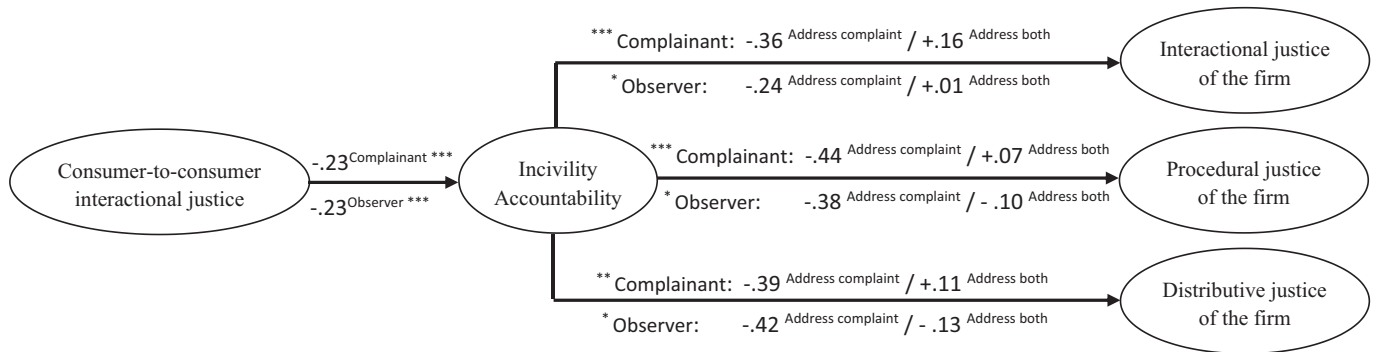


Fig. 4. Study 2's structural model results. Notes:

- Standardized path estimates depicted above (below) each path correspond to the first-party complainant (third-party observer) sample.
- SEM fit for first-party (n = 256) sample: $\chi^2 = 349.44$, $df = 145$, $\chi^2/df = 2.41$; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; SRMR = .06; RMSEA = .07 (90% CI: .06–.08).
- SEM fit for third-party (n = 347) sample: $\chi^2 = 307.89$, $df = 145$, $\chi^2/df = 2.12$; CFI = .97; TLI = .97; SRMR = .06; RMSEA = .06 (90% CI: .05–.07).
- *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

the firm's justice constructs, per the recommendations of Bagozzi and Yi (2012) and Fornell (1983). The standardized path estimates are presented in Fig. 4. H1 was supported with a significant C2C interactional justice → incivility accountability path estimate ($-.23^{\text{Complainant}} \& \text{Observer}$, $p < .001$). As consumers perceived the C2C exchange to be less fair, they increasingly held the firm accountable for failing to address the incivility.

Per the recommendation of Russell et al. (1998) when using experimental data with SEM, we used the multi-group method of moderation to evaluate the effect of the firm's response strategy in each sample. Prior to assessing H2–H4's moderation, though, configural invariance, full metric invariance, and factor variance invariance testing ensured the interpretability of the results across the treatment conditions in each sample (Byrne 2004). Both samples passed all three invariance tests. Regarding H2–H4 and the multi-group method, a baseline model fixed all structural parameters to equality across the two conditions. A second model was estimated with the path of interest allowed to vary freely across groups (Byrne 2001). A chi-square difference test assessed H2–H4. Significant moderation was found to support H2's effect of a firm's response strategy on the incivility accountability → interactional justice relationship ($\Delta\chi^2 = 14.5^{\text{Complainant}}$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001/\Delta\chi^2 = 4.5^{\text{Observer}}$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .05$). The standardized path estimate was $-.36^{\text{Complainant}}$ ($p < .001$)/ $-.24^{\text{Observer}}$ ($p < .01$) when the firm addressed only the complaint, yet this path became $+0.16^{\text{Complainant}}$ ($p < .10$)/ $+0.01^{\text{Observer}}$ (n.s.) when the firm addressed the complaint and the incivility which completely removed the injustice. Thus, incivility accountability's negative effect on interactional justice for both a complainant's and an observer's assessment was significantly counteracted when the firm addressed the complaint and incivility, with the firm deemed considerably more fair in the interactional exchange.

Also supported was H3's moderation effect of a firm's response strategy on the incivility accountability → procedural justice relationship ($\Delta\chi^2 = 11.5^{\text{Complainant}}$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001/\Delta\chi^2 = 5.9^{\text{Observer}}$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .05$). The standardized path

estimate was $-.44^{\text{Complainant}}$ ($p < .001$)/ $-.38^{\text{Observer}}$ ($p < .001$) when the firm addressed only the complaint, but this negative effect was reduced to $+0.07^{\text{Complainant}}$ (n.s.)/ $-.10^{\text{Observer}}$ (n.s.) when the firm addressed both the complaint and incivility to support H3. Similarly, H4's moderating effect of the firm's response strategy on the incivility accountability → distributive justice relationship was supported ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10.4^{\text{Complainant}}$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01/\Delta\chi^2 = 5.8^{\text{Observer}}$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .05$). The standardized path was $-.39^{\text{Complainant}}$ ($p < .001$)/ $-.42^{\text{Observer}}$ ($p < .001$) when the firm addressed the complaint, but reduced to $+0.11^{\text{Complainant}}$ (n.s.)/ $-.13^{\text{Observer}}$ (n.s.) when the firm addressed both the complaint and the incivility. Subsequently, H5 was supported with evidence for H1–H4 from both first-party and third-party perspectives.

Posthoc Analysis

Our primary analysis establishes that the negative effect of an uncivil comment is attenuated by a company's response, yet we also conducted a follow-up analysis with PROCESS (v 2.13, Hayes 2013) to assess whether “justice is served” by the company's response.² Separately in each sample, the direct effect of the different replies by the service provider was compared with a dichotomous variable (0 = address only the complaint and 1 = address both the complaint and uncivil comment). The interaction between incivility accountability and the firm's response remained in the model to assess the overall effect of the firm's response.

The direct effect of the firm addressing the uncivil comment is positive and significant for distributive ($\beta = .56^{\text{Complainant}}$, $p < .01/\beta = .38^{\text{Observer}}$, $p = .02$), interactional ($\beta = 1.18^{\text{Complainant}}$, $p < .01/\beta = .56^{\text{Observer}}$, $p < .01$), and procedural ($\beta = .67^{\text{Complainant}}$, $p < .01/\beta = .44^{\text{Observer}}$, $p < .01$) justice. In addition, the interaction between incivility accountability and the firm addressing the uncivil comment is still significant for all three justices in both samples. We then used the estimated

² We thank an anonymous reviewer for posing this question.

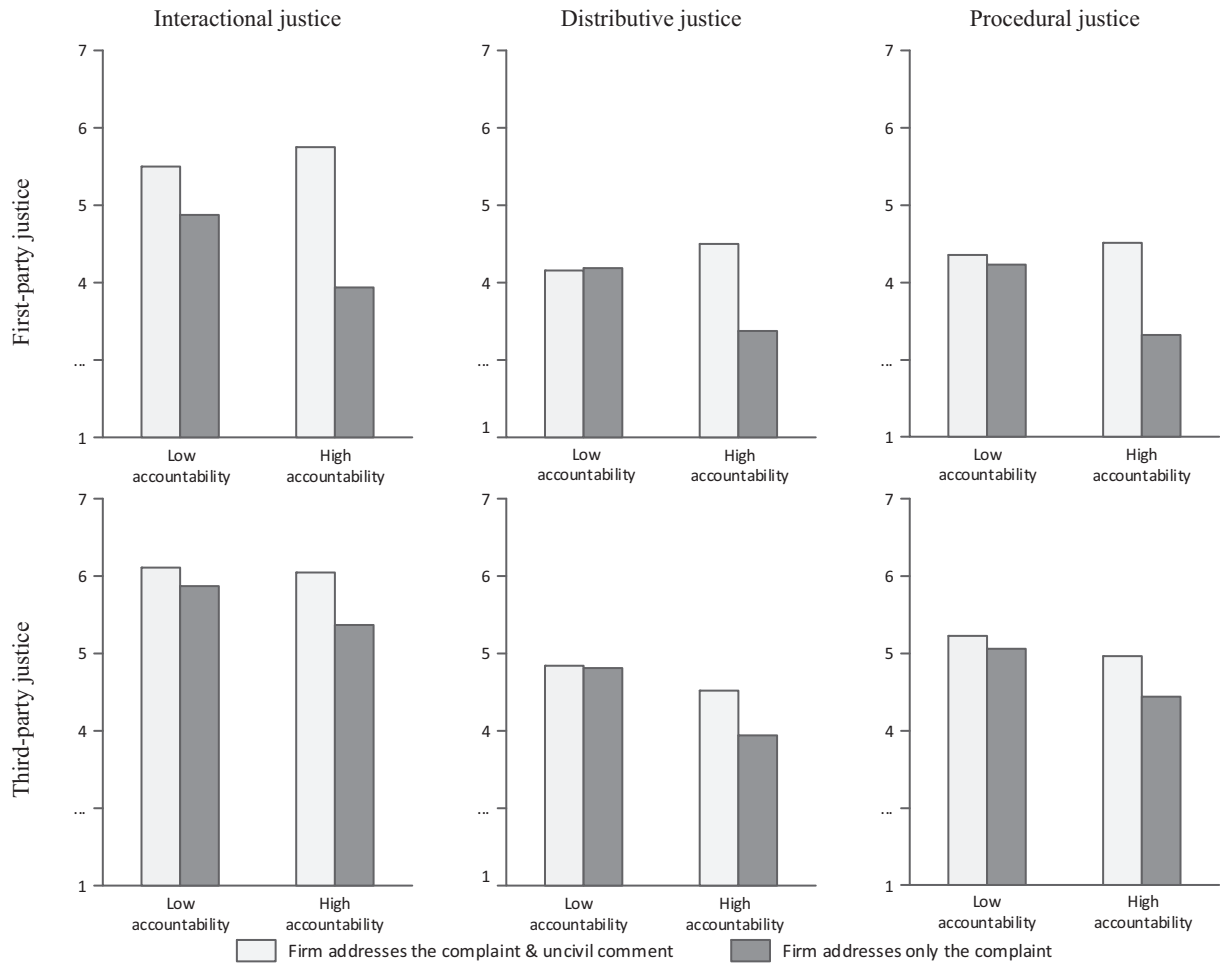


Fig. 5. Illustration of the interaction between firm reply strategy and accountability.

coefficients to graph the interaction between firm reply and incivility accountability as shown in Fig. 4. All three organizational justice dimensions are evaluated at a higher level when a firm addresses the uncivil comment, as illustrated in Fig. 5. Notably, this difference is most pronounced when consumers hold the firm accountable for not addressing the uncivil encounter.

Discussion

Study 2's results help answer the research question by showing that consumers assess the fairness of other-consumers' interactions during a service recovery via CSM. The results indicate consumers will assign some degree of accountability to a firm for failing to address such interactional unfairness on this virtual service channel managed by the company. Furthermore, we show both complainants and observers react favorably to a firm's attempt to manage C2C incivility in this service environment. When viewing the response strategy addressing the rude comments, subjects elicited more favorable views of the company. More precisely, they perceived the service provider's treatment of the complainant (interactional), fairness of the complaint handling process (procedural), and non-

economic benefit (distributive) as all being significantly more just than when it failed to address the incivility. Thus, we provide evidence of consumers directing online incivility toward others as a source of injustice that permeates into perceptions of justice of a service provider in a CSM channel.

General Discussion and Implications

The purpose of the current research is to explore how service recovery on corporate social media channels is impacted by C2C online incivility. Our results suggest that some consumers direct online incivility toward complainants during these virtual service encounters, which impacts the targets and observers of such incivility. This finding puts companies on notice that these uncivil interactions are negatively impacting service recovery evaluations through perceptions of justice. A qualitative study and subsequent quantitative inquiry suggest that consumers are assessing the fairness of C2C and consumer-to-firm exchanges, with a company's mishandling of online incivility viewed unjustly by complainants and observers of the exchange. However, a firm choosing to address incivility offsets the negative impact. Below we outline implications and various avenues for future research.

Table 3
Areas of potential impact and research questions regarding consumer-to-consumer interactional justice.

Research team(s)	Findings	Potential research questions regarding consumer-to-consumer interactions during service recovery and customer justice evaluations
DeWitt, Nguyen, and Marshall (2008), Schoefer and Diamantopoulos (2008)	Emotions mediate the effect of justice perceptions from service recovery on customer loyalty.	What form of negative emotions do C2C interactions during service recovery create? Do the negative emotions spillover onto the company, possibly enhancing the negative emotions felt from the service failure?
Grégoire and Fisher (2006), Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux (2009)	Relationship quality enhances the effect of service recovery.	How do customers high in relationship quality interpret uncivil C2C interactions? Are they more likely to dismiss the interactions or take offense? As a result, do such customers expect a brand to take more control of the social media channel?
Dong, Evans, and Zou (2008); Sugathan, Ranjan, and Mulky (2017)	Customers' co-creation of service recovery can enhance recovery satisfaction and repurchase intention.	Do uncivil C2C interactions hinder or enhance the desire for co-creating service recovery?
Schamari and Schaefer (2015), van Laer and de Ruyter (2010), Van Noort and Willemsen (2012)	The style of message response and type of medium used to address online complaints must be considered to recover customers.	What is the optimal message style for firms to use when addressing online incivility between consumers? How should it change based on type of medium (e.g., microblogs, blogs, social networks, photo sharing social networks, ephemeral social networks)?
Blazevic et al. (2014); Hamilton, Kaltcheva, and Rohm (2016); Rooderkerk and Pauwels (2016)	The characteristics of people and content drive consumers to interact with each other and with brands to produce positive outcomes.	How will C2C interactional justice influence satisfactory immersion within a brand's CSM? Will online interaction propensity be reduced for a civil audience due to uncivil other-consumers? How do controversial messages by uncivil others impact the amount of content shared on brand's CSM page: will it drive posters away or create more dialogue?
Weun, Beatty, and Jones (2004)	Failure severity directly impacts customers' recovery evaluations and attenuates the effect of recovery actions.	Do uncivil C2C interactions and justice perceptions during the complaint process increase the perceived failure severity? Will consumers who have suffered a severe initial failure react more negatively to C2C interactional justice?
Maxham and Netemeyer (2002)	Two consecutive failures or unsatisfactory recoveries (i.e., double deviations) are detrimental to customer perceptions, especially in close time proximity.	Do customers perceive uncivil C2C interactions and justice perceptions during the complaint process as a form of double deviation if the company does not respond? Are multiple interactions also seen as compounding failures? Does the time sequence of these failures matter (whether they happen at once or are spread out)?
Pranter and Martin (1991), Grove and Fisk (1997), Harris and Reynolds (2003)	Not addressing customer misbehavior in physical service settings affects loyalty, purchase intent, and other constructs.	Will consumer justice have a stronger or weaker relationship with other constructs (e.g., satisfaction, purchase intent) in physical versus online settings? Do consumers blame firms for mismanaging in-person incivility more or less harshly in physical settings?
Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001); Relling et al. (2016)	Brand community character leads to positive outcomes for firms.	What frequency and magnitude of online incivility will negatively impact the character of a community? How does this tipping point affect other aspects related to a firm?
Homburg, Fürst, and Koschate (2010)	A company's complaint handling design varies based on customer characteristics.	How do complaint handling design characteristics impact customer justice compared to other forms of justice? Do design characteristics have the same effect for offline and online complaints given the increased possibility of online incivility?
Mattila and Patterson (2004)	Cultural norms impact compensation and failure explanation on recovery satisfaction	What are the effects of cultural norms on uncivil C2C interactions and justice perceptions?

Theoretical Implications and Future Research Opportunities

The current research expands justice theory with new perspectives of justice. To show this contribution, Fig. 3 illustrates the relationships of the studied interactions between a firm, customer, uncivil consumer, and third-party consumer observer. As seen in the left of Fig. 3, extant service recovery research has traditionally maintained a narrow focus on complainant–firm perceived justice. Our findings support the existence of three other relevant relationships. Specifically, and as illustrated in the bottom of Fig. 3, this research identifies

C2C interactional justice as an alternative form of fairness during a service recovery. We evidence that C2C interactional justice is a mechanism by which the long-standing dimensions of procedural, interactional, and distributive justice of a firm are impacted by events indirectly related to the firm or service failure. Understanding how a new type of justice impacts existing justice dimensions is paramount, due to its established links with satisfaction, loyalty, repatronage, word of mouth, and other positive firm outcomes. Moreover, this new form of justice will likely permeate into other theoretical domains and frameworks, as listed in Table 3 with accompanying research

questions. For instance, it is possible C2C interactional justice is applicable to not only CSM service recovery, but also any public, in-person recovery (e.g., restaurants, stores, or event venues) where other-consumers may act uncivilly.

A second implication resides within multifoci justice theory (Rupp and Cropanzano 2002; Rupp et al. 2014). This type of justice originated in workplace contexts, but our work injects a multifoci perspective into service recovery contexts. Multifoci justice asserts an employee can be the target of unfair treatment from various sources, such as from a customer, peer employee, supervisor, or the organization. The assessment of fairness is then made by the targeted employee. Our work adds an additional layer to multifoci justice theory by showing that third-party consumers form justice perceptions when observing uncivil treatment perpetrated on another, as illustrated on the right side of Fig. 3. Hence, we build upon the multifoci justice domain by showing that the *target* of an injustice source and a *third-party consumer* who observes the source-target unfair exchange will each form perceptions of interactional justice during a service recovery.

Additionally, a related third-party implication is the justice evaluation is ascribed not only to the uncivil actor, but also to the service provider, as indicated by the top portion of Fig. 3. The service provider who has made the CSM channel available is held accountable for its inaction to uphold social norms of fair treatment, and subsequently, perceived to be unfair in all three existing justice dimensions. This extends the work of McColl-Kennedy and Sparks (2003) regarding apportioning accountability to a firm. Their accountability assignment to a service provider is a first-person assessment of how the provider volitionally acted (or failed to act) during a complainant's recovery. Our work extends their accountability theory by showing how watchful observers assign responsibility to a firm for its inaction during a problematic service recovery.

Prominently, the prior multifoci and third-party conceptualizations imply the arrival of a polyadic justice effect. This should be concerning to firms offering customer service via social media, as the number of people observing will far exceed the number of people being targeted with online incivility. An audience of third-party consumers who observe an uncivil act from one consumer to another will judge the fairness and hold the company accountable based on its corresponding actions. Service research is rooted in a dyadic perspective (e.g., Solomon et al. 1985), but technology and sociocultural changes are causing customers to increasingly complain to firms on social media (Baer 2016), thus necessitating a polyadic perspective of service recovery. Applying a lens of third-party consumers who watch and evaluate a recovery touches on several research streams, as listed in Table 3.

The final theoretical implication relates to customer co-creation and co-production, a long-standing component in the provision of traditional service offerings (Bendapudi and Leone 2003; Vargo and Lusch 2004). Principles of service co-production are being adapted to newer technology interfaces not commonly associated with service interfaces (Bacile, Ye, and Swilley 2014). In a similar move, researchers are uncovering the benefits and pitfalls of enabling co-creation in

the service recovery process (Dong, Evans, and Zou 2008; Sugathan, Ranjan, and Mulky 2017). We add to the co-created service recovery literature by showing that uncivil other-consumers are co-creators of value during another's service recovery, and that this co-created value may be negative. This co-creation extension has not been considered in recent advances of value co-destruction in social interactions during the provision of service (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, and Gruber 2011; Plé, Chumpitaz, and Cáceres 2010). Future research should examine, possibly through a co-production lens, the role of other-customers in creating both beneficial and detrimental recovery effects.

Managerial Implications

The current research offers practical guidance by suggesting that firms play a role in handling uncivil encounters in a virtual service environment open to public view. Our manipulation of a firm addressing a consumer's uncivil comment completely attenuated the negative affect of incivility on justice perceptions of a firm. In practice, such responses may be uncommon – the netnographic results found zero such attempts by the firm – as brands may not want to offend or turn away potential customers. Thus, this research represents an opportunity for academia to lead practice by suggesting that firms need to proactively address incivility during service recovery situations on firm-managed CSM channels. Hence, firms offering customer service via CSM channels must consider the need to become digital referees between some consumers.

Going further, the current research suggests firms must enable their CSM management departments or automatic response software to not only handle customer complaints, but also deal with customer input into the complaint handling process. Handling uncivil behavior by other-consumers, as challenging as it may be, is only one part of the process. In addition, CSM personnel and software need to be able to assess a complaint for a relevant response and whether a customer is being negatively impacted by other-consumer interjections. Stated differently, service recovery alone is a difficult process as surveys attest that companies lose billions of dollars to bad customer service (Hyken 2016). This difficulty is compounded on CSM by other-consumers' responses, so personnel must be trained and response software must be programmed to understand complaints, civility perception, and conflict resolution to effectively handle social media customer service. These problems are further complicated by the third-party effects we observed in Study 2, as personnel and software will need to assess the extent an interaction is seen as unjust by observers and publicly address the issue to manage perceptions of the firm. Handling an uncivil encounter privately, either through the victim or the perpetrator, is insufficient for dealing with negative effects within the broader viewing public.

Limitations

One notable limitation is that the netnographic study is limited to a single firm, industry, and social network

(Facebook). Assessing additional companies and industries across different social networks (e.g., Twitter, Instagram) may offer more insights. The experimental study has limitations associated with hypothetical lab-based scenarios, such as surveying respondents who were not in a real-life situation, which may have produced effects that would have otherwise been different if the situation were unfolding in an actual service experience. Similarly, Study 2 had participants focus on the uncivil interaction as a means to elicit responses. Though this aligns with experimental research in the justice literature, it may have produced effects that were artificially enhanced by the respondents' focused attention on the stimuli. Another limitation is Study 2's stimuli of only a single other-consumer interjecting with commentary. It is possible that many consumers could interject and some comments may be supportive, as well as uncivil. An additional limitation is a lack of clear understanding if incivility accountability is considered an outcome of a firm's response or a mediator of C2C justice. This is something worthy of future investigation. Another limitation is not examining different amounts of time it takes for a firm to reply. Our study was the first in this domain, so we were not able to assess all potential moderating factors, but examining response time is an attractive area of future research that can be linked to offline service recovery research involving customer wait time and prompt customer service.

In addition, Study 2's stimuli combined both types of incivility identified in Study 1. Future research could assess how each incivility type is driven by different underlying motivations or how each type impacts outcome constructs of interest. Finally, the reaction of the uncivil other-consumer who was reprimanded by the service provider for his or her behavior was not assessed. An uncivil other-consumer who is a troll and non-loyal to a firm may have a different reaction than a truly loyal brand advocate whose intent to defend the firm is met with public admonishment from the beloved company. This newer consumer role was first identified as a badvocate (Bacile, Allen, and Hofacker 2014) and is most likely a complex web of brand identification, entitlement, and resistance that was outside of our scope, but a greater understanding is worthy of future investigation.

Appendix A. Pilot Study Details

A benchmark analysis was conducted to illustrate certain actions taking place on corporate social media (CSM) channels within the scope of the current research. A quantitative content analysis (Altheide 1987; Krippendorff 1980) was used to identify the amount of complaints consumers post, how often firms respond to complaints, the amount of uncivil comments made from other-consumers to complainants, and how often a firm attempts to address such incivility. A total of 4,091 message posts from ten different firms' Facebook pages' visitor posts across a seven-day period served as the data source. The

data was acquired with custom scripted Python code used to communicate with Facebook's servers to download all of the message posts from consumers and firms from the ten respective official company pages. All ten firms are popular U.S. service-related companies from the retail, hotel, and restaurant industries. These are prototypical types of companies that deal with complaint handling and service recovery initiatives.


We followed generally accepted practices (e.g., Krippendorff 2004) for this type of content analysis. First, two executive MBA students with experience in customer service and complaint handling served as the coders. An Excel spreadsheet served as the code book to record each coder's information. Each was given definitions of four different types of message posts: what constituted a complaint, a firm's response to a complaint, an uncivil response by a fellow consumer to a complainant, and a firm's response to such incivility. Second, the two coders conducted pilot coding across 400 posts to code for each of the four types of message posts. Agreement between the coders was represented with a kappa value of .93, which exceeded the recommended inter-rater reliability threshold (Krippendorff 2004) and provided evidence of a robust coding book. Disagreements were discussed and clarified. With pilot coding complete, each coder independently coded the remaining posts, resulting in a final kappa value of .95.

Results across the ten firms revealed that 45% of all message threads (i.e., a new conversation started by a customer) were complaints, ranging from 22% to 70% by firm. Mean response rate to complaints was 87%, ranging from 70% to 94% by each company. Incivility from a consumer toward a complainant was 17% of all ten firms' complaint message threads, ranging from 10% to 27% for each company. The ten firms never addressed (0%) any of these uncivil attacks from one consumer on a complainant. The pilot study's results are similar to Study 1's focal firm, which responded to 92% of all complaints. The amount of complaints (44%) and incivility (23%) for Study 1's firm was also similar to the pilot study's firms, thereby providing some evidence that the CSM channel of the netnography's focal company is a similar online environment to several other companies.

Appendix B. Experimental Stimuli Used in Study 2


All subjects were given a service failure scenario where a customer was served poorly prepared food in a restaurant, complained in the restaurant, but it was not resolved satisfactorily, after which the customer chose to complain on the restaurant's official Facebook page. Subjects in the first-party sample were asked to imagine this happened to them, while subjects in the third-party sample were asked to imagine this happened to another customer. They were then asked to view and read the screenshot image below as part of a given scenario in each respective sample:

First-party complainant stimuli:

 **You** ▶ ABC Restaurant
6 hrs

I had the worst experience at an ABC and I wasn't even given a manager to speak with. I found mold on my meal after eating about a quarter of it. No one apologized or even had the decency to come to the table. The location was 5550 Elm Street in Atlanta.

Like Comment Share

 **Chris Wilson** LMFAO, really? You began to eat a meal and did not see the mold beforehand? Honestly, that is your fault. If you aren't intelligent enough to check your meal before eating it, that is just sad. I blame you for being stupid. I doubt this is even true. Bet you are a liar, too.
Like - Reply - 6 hrs

Third-party observer stimuli:

 **Jamie Smith** ▶ ABC Restaurant
6 hrs

I had the worst experience at an ABC and I wasn't even given a manager to speak with. I found mold on my meal after eating about a quarter of it. No one apologized or even had the decency to come to the table. The location was 5550 Elm Street in Atlanta.

Like Comment Share

 **Chris Wilson** LMFAO, really? You began to eat a meal and did not see the mold beforehand? Honestly, that is your fault. If you aren't intelligent enough to check your meal before eating it, that is just sad. I blame you for being stupid. I doubt this is even true. Bet you are a liar, too.
Like - Reply - 6 hrs

Appendix B (continued)

First-party sample stimuli:

Subject Group 1: Firm addresses the complaint only:

 **You** ▶ ABC Restaurant
12 hrs

I had the worst experience at an ABC and I wasn't even given a manager to speak with. I found mold on my meal after eating about a quarter of it. No one apologized or even had the decency to come to the table. The location was 5550 Elm Street in Atlanta.

Like Comment Share

 **Chris Wilson** LMFAO, really? You began to eat a meal and did not see the mold beforehand? Honestly, that is your fault. If you aren't intelligent enough to check your meal before eating it, that is just sad. I blame you for being stupid. I doubt this is even true. Bet you are a liar, too.
Like - Reply - 12 hrs

 **ABC Restaurant** [Restaurant responds with your name] - We are sorry for the poor level of service during your visit. Please contact our customer care team to provide more details: service@abc-cares.com.
Like - Reply - 1 hr

Third-party sample stimuli:

Subject Group 1: Firm addresses the complaint only:

 **You** ▶ ABC Restaurant
12 hrs

I had the worst experience at an ABC and I wasn't even given a manager to speak with. I found mold on my meal after eating about a quarter of it. No one apologized or even had the decency to come to the table. The location was 5550 Elm Street in Atlanta.

Like Comment Share

 **Chris Wilson** LMFAO, really? You began to eat a meal and did not see the mold beforehand? Honestly, that is your fault. If you aren't intelligent enough to check your meal before eating it, that is just sad. I blame you for being stupid. I doubt this is even true. Bet you are a liar, too.
Like - Reply - 12 hrs

 **ABC Restaurant** [Restaurant responds with your name] -We are sorry for the poor level of service during your visit. Please contact our customer care team to provide more details: service@abc-cares.com. Chris - we value each person's opinion, but please refrain from using insults or derogatory remarks directed toward others on our Facebook page. Thank you for understanding.
Like - Reply - 1 hr

Subject Group 2: Firm addresses the complaint and address the C2C incivility:

 **Jamie Smith** ▶ ABC Restaurant
12 hrs

I had the worst experience at an ABC and I wasn't even given a manager to speak with. I found mold on my meal after eating about a quarter of it. No one apologized or even had the decency to come to the table. The location was 5550 Elm Street in Atlanta.

Like Comment Share

 **Chris Wilson** LMFAO, really? You began to eat a meal and did not see the mold beforehand? Honestly, that is your fault. If you aren't intelligent enough to check your meal before eating it, that is just sad. I blame you for being stupid. I doubt this is even true. Bet you are a liar, too.
Like - Reply - 12 hrs

 **ABC Restaurant** Jamie - We are sorry for the poor level of service during your visit. Please contact our customer care team to provide more details: service@abc-cares.com.
Like - Reply - 1 hr

Subject Group 2: Firm addresses the complaint and address the C2C incivility:

 **Jamie Smith** ▶ ABC Restaurant
12 hrs

I had the worst experience at an ABC and I wasn't even given a manager to speak with. I found mold on my meal after eating about a quarter of it. No one apologized or even had the decency to come to the table. The location was 5550 Elm Street in Atlanta.

Like Comment Share

 **Chris Wilson** LMFAO, really? You began to eat a meal and did not see the mold beforehand? Honestly, that is your fault. If you aren't intelligent enough to check your meal before eating it, that is just sad. I blame you for being stupid. I doubt this is even true. Bet you are a liar, too.
Like - Reply - 12 hrs

 **ABC Restaurant** Jamie - We are sorry for the poor level of service during your visit. Please contact our customer care team to provide more details: service@abc-cares.com. Chris - we value each person's opinion, but please refrain from using insults or derogatory remarks directed toward others on our Facebook page. Thank you for understanding.
Like - Reply - 1 hr

After viewing the corresponding screenshot for a subject in each respective sample, items associated with the C2C interactional justice and incivility accountability constructs were completed. In addition, due to first-party subjects being provided with the complaint language we asked them to imagine using, a realism check question (“Based on the scenario we asked you to imagine, is the complaint you viewed a realistic representation of the complaint you would post on the restaurant's Facebook page?”) on a seven-point scale anchored with extremely unrealistic/extremely realistic confirmed the complaint verbiage was viewed realistically ($M = 5.82$, $SD = 1.31$).

Subjects were then asked to imagine that they returned to the restaurant's social media page later that day and were randomly shown one of the two screenshot images below in their respective sample, then completed manipulation checks, items associated with interactional, procedural, distributive justice, and demographic information. Note: The firm's mean response time to complaints in Study 1's dataset was approximately 11 hours. Thus, the experimental stimuli depicted the firm's response time as 11 hours after the complaint was first posted.

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