REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENT DURING DIFFERENCE IN PAY LEAVE

For Spring 2015

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In Spring semester of 2015, I took a Difference in Pay Leave in order to devote more time to pursue an ongoing research project. This particular research project is about online service failure and online service recovery, two important topics in both my BUS316 (Production Operations Management) and BUS319 (Management Information Systems) classes. This project concentrated on the service failure and service recovery of pure-online service providers (“pure-play”) such as Facebook, Amazon, Google, etc. During the Difference in Pay Leave, I have revisited previous research on customer’s service recovery expectations at the pre-recovery phase, as well as on service recovery, perceived service quality, and tangible recovery effort in the immediate recovery phase. I have also revised the application of the theoretical framework for my study, which is exploratory and is an expansion of a framework developed by Miller et al. (2000). Additionally, I have adapted a new survey based on the original Critical Incident Technique (CIT) survey, employed in Miller’s (2000) study to determine whether successful recovery was related to the variables in their research model. As the CIT survey does not focus on e-commerce companies, this new survey includes additional questions regarding customer’s expectation, belief, and attitude toward pure-play and click-and-mortar service providers.

This research project also aims to employ Six Sigma tools to investigate what users think are online service failures, identify the potential causes of such failures, and suggest several approaches to improve online service. I have prepared some of the various Six Sigma tools to be used in this project, including the cause and effect (C&E) diagram, failure modes and effects analysis (FMEA), brainstorming, voice of customer (VOC), Pareto analysis, and quality function deployment (QFD).

During the Difference in Pay leave, I also spent months in Thailand and met with my co-
researcher, Dr. Mudjalin Poonprasit, who would employ the instruments and collect data from the students at the Faculty of Engineering, Khon Kaen University (KKU), a large public university in northeastern Thailand. As the Internet and online service providers are ubiquitous nowadays, we expect that both our American and Thai respondents are familiar with online service and have experience with online service recovery. However, semesters at SSU and those at KKU start and end at different time of the year. An academic year at KKU starts in June: first semester is from June to October, second semester is from November to March, and summer semester is from April to May. Moreover, it is worth noting that this academic year only applies to sophomore, junior, and senior students, while freshmen have the same academic year as SSU students. This is a result of many Thai universities’ attempt to have a standard academic year among Southeast Asian countries for the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) integration and its ASEAN University Network. Hence, we planned to continue the research project over a few more semesters and collect data from a larger respondent pool in both countries. We hoped that the expansion of this project would bring more interesting results and allow us to compare different and/or similar perceptions of American and Thai users.

While some of my previous research have already been published in an academic journal, a few research projects are still in progress. Due to time constraint and heavy teaching load, most of my research usually takes quite a few years before they can be completed. The Difference In Pay Leave allowed me to dedicate my time and energy to pursue this particular project and make agreeable progress, and I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to everyone involved.