2021

Fairness, Emotional Intelligence, and Ethical Decision-Making in Customer Evaluations of Providers

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Walden University
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Abstract

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of Providers

by

Tameka Austin

MS, Walden University

BS, Clark Atlanta University

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial and Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction is a topic that organizations must focus on for the success and continued sustainability of their organizations. Emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making are areas that businesses must address to identify how their businesses are impacted by the choices that customers make when working with corporations. The gig economy (short- or long-term project in which a contract worker is hired to perform a specific task or long-term consultant assignment) is an area that has not been addressed to a great extent by psychology researchers. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction in customers who utilize innovative business model services. Justice theory was used to guide the study. The Consumer Emotional Intelligence Scale, Fairness Scale, Customer Satisfaction Scale, and Consumer Ethics Scale were used to assess the variables. Quantitative surveys were collected from 19 participants who identified that they had experienced a service failure with a gig economy independent provider. Results from correlation analysis and multiple regression indicated no significant relationships between customer satisfaction and fairness, emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making of customers. Results may provide executives and their leadership teams with insight on how to serve gig economy customers when service failure occurs, which can lead to positive social change within companies that use a gig economy business model.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother for all she taught me throughout my life. I am forever grateful for the time I spent with you despite your early departure from the earth. Thank you for the leadership training you gave me, and I hope to continue to grow into the person you knew I could be. Thank you for your faithfulness toward me that has been unmatched and for teaching me to develop my own faith. Although you wanted your flowers while you were living, it would be dishonorable for me not to address the faithfulness you showed toward me.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I have to thank God for His faithfulness toward me. Thank you for giving me the strength, grace, and the wisdom I needed as I worked throughout this PhD program. Additional thanks go to my dissertation chair, Dr. Richard Thompson, for the help I received. I am thankful for Dr. Peggy Samples for working as my second committee member. I am also grateful to Mr. Levon Terrell for teaching my first leadership development course and the way you demonstrated you believed in me. Additionally, thank you to my dad for asking me about this process along the way. Although you passed away before I earned this degree, it is a comfort to me to know that you were here to see me earn my master's degree and finish the research for this study. Lastly, thank you to Walden for making it possible for me to attend school online. To my grandparents, Pastor Richard and Dora Banks and Rev. John and Emma Jefferson, it is my hope that I continue the grace you operated in to lead and develop leaders well. To Alexis Stanley, thank you for your vision for our family, which is a source of inspiration.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The goal of this study was to add to the existing research on customer satisfaction and customer emotional intelligence by examining the interactions between customers and independent providers who service platform-based businesses. I addressed the predictors (customer emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making) as they pertain to customer satisfaction in the gig economy. This research may provide findings that industrial/organizational psychologists can use to assist organizations in consulting to provide training for independent providers who service platform-based corporations. Findings may provide insight that assists independent providers with providing better service to their customers, which may improve the economy in organizations that serve customers throughout the United States. In this chapter, I address the purpose of this study and clarify the problem statement. Additionally, the research questions are identified. The terms are defined, and the scope and limitations of the study are addressed. Background information is also provided.

Background

Researchers have performed studies on the use of innovative business models and their influence on society (Pisano, Pironti, & Rieple, 2015; Stevens, 2016). Researchers have identified three main types of innovative business models: infrastructure driven, client driven, and finance driven (Pisano et al., 2015). The infrastructure-driven model centers around actions, new resources, or essential partnerships (Pisano et al., 2015). The client-driven model is based on the introduction of an additional style of business that transforms the market or a change in how companies relate to their customers (Pisano et

al., 2015). There are some key concepts regarding customers that could impact their ratings of contract workers. These include ethical decision-making, fairness, customer emotional intelligence, and customer satisfaction.

Emotions and ethics can influence the decisions made by individuals in several ways. For example, in organizations where employees perceive leaders to be ethical, the employee is more to elevate ethical concerns to leaders to be resolved (Hassan, Wright, & Yukl, 2014; Mumford et al., 2006). Similarly, emotional intelligence may impact the choices made by individuals (Martinez & Jaeger, 2016). Research showed there is a connection between emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making, as researchers have determined that emotional intelligence is vital in ethical decision-making (Krishnakumar & Rymph, 2012). When combined, emotions and ethics can impact customer interactions with businesses. Individuals may have biases that influence the choices they make when interacting in a business setting (Mumford et al., 2006). Also, people may experience anger when they observe unethical behavior demonstrated by others, such as by consumers who purchase products unethically, for example, by selling counterfeit exclusive brands (Martinez & Jaeger, 2016).

Questionnaires have been used to evaluate the emotion of consumers. The Consumer Emotional Ability Scale (CEAS) was developed to evaluate the emotional intelligence of consumers used in their daily lives, and this scale offers researchers the ability to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on customer relationships (Kidwell, 2004). Customers may demonstrate emotional intelligence in their interactions with independent business owners who service platform-based businesses.

There is a need for studies that address the complaint behavior of customers who use products and services offered via technology (Wu & Huang, 2015). Circumstances can occur that elevate the complaints businesses receive from customers. The lack of customer satisfaction may cause customers to complain, which is a result of the interaction the customer has with the contract worker who services a business platform. Dissatisfaction may occur when customers make purchases using technology during interactions with a representative of a corporation, which requires adjustment to procedures (Wu & Huang, 2015).

Corporations may use various processes to assess customer satisfaction. The technological processes corporations utilize are important factors in determining customer satisfaction (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Corporations can benefit from receiving specific information on how services received by customers impact the performance of their businesses. Findings indicated service is vital to the success of internet commerce businesses (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Assessment of the perspectives of clients after they have received services or products via technology can assist organizations. There is a need for additional research that explores the results of after-purchase customer satisfaction (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Customer satisfaction scales can assist in examining the customer satisfaction when they evaluate independent providers from innovative business models from a scholarly perspective. The Oliver and Swain measure was adapted by Ba and Johansson to assess customer satisfaction from recipients of services provided via the internet. This scale allows the customers to provide their evaluations of

the independent providers in a fashion that is similar to the human resource provider performance assessments that occur in traditional businesses for employees.

Scholarly studies have addressed theories of justice that defined the construct and provided insight on research findings regarding the role of fairness (Grover, 2014; Ponterotto, Mathew, & Raughley, 2013). Fairness consists of three aspects: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional fairness (Grover, 2014). Researchers have used various approaches to examine justice theory. Ponterotto et al. (2013) utilized a mixed-methods approach to conduct research on social justice theory. Moreover, research on social justice theory to examine employee satisfaction with internet policies using quantitative research methods and findings indicated research participants had positive responses in situations in which they believed the policies were fair and more satisfaction occurred when policies were developed and implemented in a relaxed environment and monitored from a remote site and multiple methods were used to implement the policies rather than using immediate termination of individuals (Grover, 2014).

Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher's (2016) Ethically Minded Consumer Behavior Scale is a 10-item scale used to assess the decisions of customers of businesses that operate in a socially responsible manner. Customers may consider ethical practices important. Findings indicated consumers will pay higher prices to utilize the services of corporations that engage in ethical practices (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). The Ethically Minded Consumer Behavior Scale was tested and validated in research studies using participants from multiple countries such as Hungary, Germany, Japan, and the

United Kingdom (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). There is a positive relationship between customer loyalty and the relationship a customer has with the service provider, which impacts the advocacy provided by the customer on behalf of the business (Roy & Eshghi, 2013). This research provides justification for examining the relationship an independent provider has with customers, which can improve this relationship.

The Joireman, Grégoire, Devezer, and Tripp (2013) Customer Model was designed to assess a customer's desire for revenge or reconciliation after they have received services from an organization. The model consists of 7-point Likert questions with items that range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Joireman et al., 2013). This framework assesses how customers were treated during a service encounter and their responses to the encounter that allowed participants to self-report if they sought revenge through complaining or negative word of mouth or if they demonstrated reparatory behavior. Findings indicated customers were prone to treat representatives from airline companies in a fair manner when they were made aware of issues that impacted the delivery of services (Joireman et al., 2013). Customers were prone to engage in behavior that demonstrated fairness such as forgiveness when there were issues with the services they received from an airline if they perceived that the organization had a sincere desire to please them despite concerns with the service they were provided (Joireman et al., 2013).

Problem Statement

Businesses may choose to utilize innovative business models to provide their products and services to their customers (Pisano et al., 2015; Wu & Huang, 2015). By

choosing to use innovative business platforms, corporations can offer greater

employment and business opportunities to individuals (Stevens, 2016). Innovative

business models have led to an increase in revenue for corporations, as internet business-

to-business revenue has increased at a significant rate since the year 2000 and

approximately 50% of all revenue obtained in businesses was received online (Wu &

Huang, 2015). Innovation has led to increased customer access when obtaining services

from corporations due to ongoing organizational (Pisano et al., 2015).

　　　　Although the use of contract workers has existed for many years, the internet has

changed how contract services are provided in contemporary society (Guzzo, 2016).

Economists have offered praise to corporations such as Uber, Airbnb, Postmates, and

Task Rabbit for opportunities for independent providers to compete for business within

the boundaries of a platform (Pasquale, 2016). Businesses may use what is regarded as

the gig economy to provide customers with access to independent providers who are

contract workers to obtain products and services they desire (Joireman et al., 2013). A gig

is defined as a short- or long-term project in which a contract worker is hired to perform a

task that may include a specific task or a long-term consultant assignment (Guzzo, 2016).

Businesses may ask customers to rate the services they have received from individuals

who are independent providers to gain awareness of the performance of the independent

providers (Rashvand & Majid, 2014). Additionally, companies may place performance

expectations on independent providers within their service contracts to maintain the right

to provide services to customers (Guzzo, 2016).

A major development in consumer behavior has been the technological word of mouth derived from social media sharing, comments, and ratings (Rosario, Sotgiu, De Valck, & Bijmolt, 2016). As a result of the broad reach of social media, ratings of independent providers have more potential to have positive or negative impacts on those providers (Joireman et al., 2013). For example, customers may choose to rate independent providers in an unfair manner, which can have a negative impact on the independent providers' income or service contract. To date, research on the fairness of customer ratings on independent providers has not been conducted or has been very limited (Wilson, Conlan, & Koopman, 2011). Specifically, customer individual differences that might impact their ratings of independent providers need to be better understood (Rosario et al., 2016). Among these individual differences are several concepts from organizational and consumer psychology, including emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and concepts of fairness (Bang, Sooyeon, & Lyndon, 2014; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Liu, Yang, Zeng, & Waller, 2015; Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). The role of fairness and customer satisfaction has not been addressed in innovative business models (Kumar & Mokhtar, 2016). However, previous research demonstrated that distributive justice is a predictor of consumer complaint intentions (Wu & Huang, 2015). Further research has shown that organizational justice plays a role in behavior demonstrated by customers regarding whether customers engaged in fair or destructive behaviors after a perceived service failure in the airline and electronics industries (Joireman et al., 2013). However, there is a gap in the research on customer behaviors after the receipt of service from corporations that utilize a platform

for customers to access their services. There is a need to expand the research to assess the services beyond the airline and electronics industries (Joireman et al., 2013).

Emotional intelligence may impact the decisions made by customers who purchase products that are accessed via technology (Ahn, Sung, & Drumwright, 2016). There are four distinct areas involved in emotional intelligence, which consist of the ability to control emotions, process emotions, discern emotions, and use emotions (Krishnakumar & Rymph, 2012). Kidwell (2004) performed research on emotional intelligence of customers and the results showed customers with higher levels of emotional intelligence made better decisions regarding their selection of digital products than individuals with lower levels of emotional intelligence. There is a gap in the research on emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making as separate constructs in customer evaluations of independent providers. Segon and Booth (2015) noted emotional intelligence scales must contain ethical decision-making components. However, there is a gap in the research on emotional intelligence of customers and ethical decision-making as separate constructs in studies of platform business models.

Researchers have not examined the role of ethical decision-making and customer evaluations of independent providers of corporations that use platform business models. There is a need for research that addresses other risks that may occur in the outsource industry beyond the ethical behaviors of the supplier (Ndubisi et al., 2016). Moreover, the role of customer satisfaction in innovative business models has not been addressed in the research literature. There is a need for additional research that explores the results of after-purchase customer satisfaction (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Individuals who purchase

products and services from independent providers may choose to demonstrate unethical behavior. Survey results obtained from participants in information technology research revealed 81% of participants would engage in unethical behavior (Bolhari, Radfar, Alborzi, Poorebrahimi, & Dehghani, 2017). Based on these findings, it is vital to explore the relationship between the emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction of customers who receive services from independent providers who service corporations that utilize innovative business models.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction in customers who utilize innovative business model services. I tested the customer satisfaction of customers who utilize innovative business models. I specifically tested the fairness, ethical decision-making, and emotional intelligence of customers and how these factors predict customer satisfaction. I also tested the combined effect of each of the independent variables on customer satisfaction.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions for this study were developed based on the literature on customer emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction. The research questions were addressed using Ba and Johansson's (2008) Customer Satisfaction Scale. The following research questions were selected for the study:

RQ1: Are ratings of customer satisfaction of independent providers impacted by customer emotional intelligence, fairness orientation, and ethical decision-making orientation?

$H_\text{o}1_1$: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by customer emotional intelligence.

$H_\text{a}1_1$: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by customer emotional intelligence.

$H_\text{o}1_2$: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by fairness orientation.

$H_\text{a}1_2$: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by fairness orientation.

$H_\text{o}1_3$: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by ethical decision-making orientation.

$H_\text{a}1_3$: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by ethical decision-making orientation.

RQ2: When combined in a single analysis, does the inclusion of emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethics account for significantly more incremental variance in customer satisfaction ratings than any of the predictors in isolation?

$H_\text{o}2$: There is no increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings.

$H_\text{a}2$: There is an increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings.

RQ3: When combined does distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice impact customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation?

H_o3: There is no combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation.

H_a3: There is a combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation.

Conceptual Framework

Social justice theory was the theoretical framework selected for this research project. Customer behavior has been explored using social justice theory (Wilson et al., 2011). Justice theory has been widely recognized in the field of psychology. A general view of fairness is to evaluate an event or situation to determine whether what occurred was considered fair (Wilson et al., 2011).

Although there are holistic perceptions of fairness, there are general ideas regarding what is included in fairness. Additionally, individuals may have different perspectives regarding how they define fairness. Individuals with a service perspective of fairness may consider distributive justice as fair treatment in an outcome that an individual receives, procedural justice as fairness in policies, interpersonal justice as fair treatment of a customer by an organizational representative, and informational justice as fair communication in a service transaction (Wilson et al., 2011).

Corporations can benefit from insight regarding the fairness demonstrated by customers when they assessed the independent providers who utilized their platform to provide products or services to customers. Businesses can obtain information regarding

the fairness provided by customers and obtain insight regarding the behavior

demonstrated by independent providers when they believe they were not treated in a fair

manner. According to justice theory, individuals who believe they experienced unfair

treatment will act to resolve the injustice (Wu & Huang, 2015). Corporations may

implement policies to demonstrate justice within their businesses such as implementing

rating requirements in their contracts with independent providers to maintain standards

within their businesses. Procedural justice is considered the consistent application of a

procedure within an organization (Grover, 2014). The current study focused on fairness

behaviors demonstrated by customers in terms of how they distribute justice in their

evaluations of the independent providers. The study may provide innovative corporations

with details regarding the role of fairness, customer emotional intelligence, customer

satisfaction, and customer ethical decision-making during the evaluations based on

corporate customer satisfaction survey procedures implemented in their organizations.

Emotional intelligence theory was an additional theoretical framework of this study.

Emotional intelligence theory is commonly known as emotional intelligence (Educational

Business Articles, 2016).

The definition of emotional intelligence is the ability to manage the emotions of

self and others (Trejo, 2016). Emotional intelligence theory became recognized during

1993 by Gardner based on social intelligence theory derived in 1920 by Thorndike

(Wisker & Poulis, 2015). There are four areas of emotional intelligence, which include

self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills (Educational

Business Articles, 2016). Ethical theory was an additional theoretical framework for the

study. Consequentialist ethical decisions are based on the consequences of activities (Brown University, 2017). Individuals with a concern for other individuals may support the common good approach ethical theory. Rousseau (as cited in Brown University, 2017) asserted that individuals should support a view that is best for society from a holistic perspective, and this theoretical approach focuses on demonstration of respect and mercy shown toward other individuals. Fostering the common good of society is a way of advancing the common good of individuals within communities (McPherson, 2013). The core of successful business and leadership activities is the desire to achieve the common good of individuals (Alexander & Buckingham, 2011).

Nature of the Study

The research project on fairness, emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and customer satisfaction of innovative business model customers was quantitative in nature. This approach was consistent with the current quantitative research literature on the influence of fairness, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making on the customer satisfaction ratings of customers who receive services from innovative businesses. The independent or predictor variables for the study were emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness. The dependent variable was customer satisfaction ratings. Self-report surveys obtained from research participants who had used the services of independent providers were used to test the hypotheses. Each of the independent variables was analyzed using linear regression to determine whether these variables were predictors of customer satisfaction ratings. Moreover, the variables for RQ2 were entered in a step-wise manner for the linear regression analysis to determine

whether there was an increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer

satisfaction ratings (see Wang-Jones, Alhassoon, Hattrup, Ferdman, & Lowman, 2017).

Definitions

Gig: A gig is regarded as a short- or long-term project in which a contract worker

is hired to perform a task that may include a specific task or a long-term consultant

assignment (Guzzo, 2016).

Customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is regarded as the subtle relationship

between consumer desires and the performance of the representative of an organization

from the consumers' perspective (Sernell, 2016).

Ethical decision-making: Ethical decision-making is regarded as the desire to do

what is right in situations (Vitell & Muncy, 2005).

Customer (un)ethical behavior: Customer (un)ethical behavior is regarded as

behavior that is demonstrated by customers that is assessed by what is regarded as normal

behavior (Greenbaum, Quade, Mawritz, Kim, & Crosby, 2014).

Fairness: Fairness is regarded as three widely accepted components that include

distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional fairness (Grover, 2014).

Customer emotional intelligence: Customer emotional intelligence is regarded as

customer ability to facilitate emotions, perceive emotions, understand emotions, and

manage emotions (Kidwell, Hardesty, & Childers, 2008).

Social justice theory: Social justice theory is utilized when individuals believe

they were treated in an unfair manner as they work to resolve the injustice (Wu & Huang,

2015).

Assumptions

I assumed that each participant would provide truthful answers for each of the instruments selected. I also assumed that each instrument would offer the necessary data to answer the research questions for each variable. Finally, I assumed each participant would be honest regarding meeting the criteria for the study, and had purchased products or services from a platform-based company from an independent provider in the past.

Scope and Delimitations

The limitations of the study included the parameters of the sampling consisting of individuals who had utilized platform-based businesses. The participants were adults from within the United States. The predictors examined in the study were customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness. Customer satisfaction was the outcome variable. Customer emotional intelligence was researched within the context of the food industry (Kidwell et al., 2008). This study may contain findings that can be generalized in other arenas.

Limitations

The limitations of the study consisted of the parameters of the study. The variables of the study were examined to determine what the limitations were after the study occurred. The data collection occurred online from participants who were in the United States, which provided additional limitations.

Significance

This study was significant because it was the first of its kind to address the fairness perceptions, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making of customers on

their ratings of independent providers who service the gig economy. There is a gap in the industrial/organizational psychology literature on contract workers and freelancers because these workers have been understudied by the profession (Bergman & Jean, 2016). The current study may offer information on the impact of customers' individual differences when they provide evaluations of independent providers. The study may effect social change by revealing the psychological processes that play a role in the rating of independent providers. This study was an attempt to add to the scholarly research on the gig economy by providing insight to corporations on customer evaluations through examination of the research variables: emotional intelligence, fairness, ethical decision-making, and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, this study may provide information to independent providers regarding customers' individual differences that are important when being rated. Individuals are subject to the choices others make in organizations, and they are prone to evaluate those decisions for fairness (Colquitt, 2001).

This research may offer insight on performance appraisal provided by customers in their evaluations of the independent providers, which has historically been performed by the human resource departments within corporations. Although the customers are not employers of the independent providers, they serve the role of determining whether the providers are able to maintain their contractual right to offer services for corporations that utilize a platform to provide services to their customers. Stakeholders such as customers, corporate executives, and independent providers may have different views regarding the performance of each gig or project. There are various factors that determine whether a project is successful, and stakeholders differ in their determination of what makes a

project successful (Rashvand & Majid, 2014). This study may contribute to the field of industrial/organizational psychology by addressing the human resource element of platform-based organizations that is obtained from the customer evaluations of independent providers who service platform corporations. Performance ratings serve as incentives in organizations, but the information regarding the use of ratings in human resources within corporations is limited (Frederiksen, Lange & Kriechel, 2017). In this study, I attempted to fill the gap in the literature on the human resource function of ratings. Additionally, there is a need to address the influence of the ethical climate in terms of the human resource practices of the people who perform work and the work practices (Guerci, Radaelli, Siletti, Cirella, & Rami Shani, 2015). The current study addressed the gap in the literature on the ethical decision-making of the clients and their evaluations of independent providers of innovative businesses.

Summary

Information regarding customer emotional intelligence may benefit companies within the United States. Training programs can occur in companies to assist independent providers who service platform-based businesses to improve customer satisfaction. This study may add to the information provided on customer satisfaction and customer emotional intelligence in the platform-based business arena. Chapter 2 includes the literature review of customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction in customers who utilize innovative business model services. In this study, I answered the following research questions: Are ratings of customer satisfaction of independent providers impacted by customer emotional intelligence, fairness orientation, and ethical decision-making orientation? When combined in a single analysis, does the inclusion of emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethics account for significantly more incremental variance in customer satisfaction ratings than any of the predictors in isolation?

Literature Search Strategy

Electronic databases were searched, which included Academic Search Complete, PsychInfo, and all databases at Walden University. The keywords used in the search included *ethical decision-making*, *emotional intelligence*, *performance evaluations*, *customer satisfaction*, *customer emotional intelligence*, *fairness*, *social justice*, *customer ratings*, and *innovation*. The Walden University library was accessed for dissertations from Walden graduates on emotional intelligence. The ProQuest Database was accessed to obtain dissertations on emotional intelligence, customer emotional intelligence, and customer satisfaction. Dissertations were retrieved between 2014 and 2018. The literature search for customer emotional intelligence did not yield any sources within the Walden University library databases on the subject. Other research databases were utilized to determine whether there was literature available on customer emotional intelligence

. Most of the literature review consists of articles from 2008 through 2017; however,

there were older articles selected that dated back to 2004. The literature search consisted of looking in the research databases for the keywords using the all text search feature for each term.

Areas such as the role of customer satisfaction and customer emotional intelligence have been addressed by researchers (Ba & Johansson, 2008; Kidwell, 2004; Madhani, 2016). Ba and Johannson (2008) researched customer satisfaction and e-commerce transactions. Kidwell (2004) examined customer emotional ability and emotional intelligence. Madhani (2016) researched customer retention and ethical practices used to market to customers. There were limited studies on the influence of emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness on customer satisfaction in innovative business model corporations that utilize independent providers to provide services to customers. The current study addressed the role of the customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness in the level of customer satisfaction demonstrated by customers who purchase products or services from independent providers who service corporations that utilize innovative business model platforms. In this study, I examined the relationships between customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction (see Fisher, 2012; Jasrai, 2014; Jones & Chin-Yen, 2015; Sheldon, Dunning, & Ames, 2014; Trejo, 2016).

Specifically, I examined customers who receive services from innovative businesses from independent providers based on the independent and dependent variables. I examine the customers' perceptions based on instruments that were normalized and psychometrically appropriate and regarded as valid and reliable.

Evaluation of customers was based on the framework of the CEAS, which consists of four branches: perceiving emotions, facilitating emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Kidwell, 2004).

Overview

Various researchers have studied the use of innovative business models and their influence on society (Lüttgens & Diener, 2016; Pisano et al., 2015; Stevens, 2016). It is necessary for companies to innovate their business models because of issues in the economy and improvements in technology (Lüttgens & Diener, 2016). Innovation has changed throughout history and will not decrease in the future (Stevens, 2016). Researchers have identified three main types of innovative business models: infrastructure driven, client driven, and finance driven (Pisano et al., 2015). Infrastructure-driven business models involve essential partners, functions of the business, and new resources; client driven models involve new value propositions, new channels, new clients, or new relationships with clients (Pisano et al., 2015). Infrastructure-driven business models may consist of businesses that operate via Short Message Service messaging via mobile phones. The most popular message service is Short Message Service, which consists of protocols and an infrastructure that is a type of service developed in the 1980s (Acker, 2014). The finance-driven innovative companies can choose to innovate their businesses through a revenue model by modifying current offers and creating new pricing models (Lüttgens & Diener, 2016). Entrepreneurs may seek financing from financially innovative companies to launch their businesses. Innovative entrepreneurs ask for financing for their ventures on crowdfunding sites based

on the internet rather than seeking funding from traditional sources such as banks and

venture capitalists (Lehner, Grabmann, & Ennsgraber, 2015). Clients may contribute to

the innovation that occurs in businesses. The digital innovation that occurs in

corporations requires the ability to involve customers in areas such as product

development and determining cost of products (Saldanha, Mithas, & Krishnan, 2017).

How customers and service providers relate to one another in businesses is an area

explored by researchers (Ba & Johannson, 2008; Bang et al., 2014; Madhani, 2016).

Customers may decide to advocate for a business or refrain from offering positive

comments to organizations or service providers based on the relationship they establish

during the purchase. Studies have demonstrated that the relationship customers have with

service providers may influence the advocacy or support offered by customers who are

satisfied with the services they received (Ba & Johannson, 2008; Bang et al., 2014;

Madhani, 2016). There is a positive relationship between customer loyalty and the

interaction a customer has with the service provider, which impacts the advocacy

provided by the customer on behalf of the business (Roy & Eshghi, 2013). Customers

may provide positive feedback regarding service encounters when they are satisfied with

the services they have received from an independent provider as a reward for the quality

of services they received. This research provides justification for examining the

connection an independent provider has with customers, which can improve this bond.

Innovative Businesses

Businesses may choose to utilize innovative business models to provide their

products and services to their customers (Pisano et al., 2015; Wu & Huang, 2015). By

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expectations on independent providers within their service contracts to maintain the right

to provide services to customers (Guzzo, 2016).

A major development in consumer behavior in contemporary society is the technological word of mouth derived from social media sharing, comments, and ratings (Rosario et al., 2016). Because of the broad reach of social media, ratings of independent providers have more potential to have positive or negative impacts on those providers (Joireman et al., 2013). For example, customers may choose to rate independent providers in an unfair manner, which can have a negative impact on the independent providers' income or service contract. To date, research on the fairness of customer ratings on independent providers has not been conducted or has been limited (Wilson et al., 2011). Specifically, customer individual differences that might impact their ratings of independent providers need to be better understood (Rosario et al., 2016). Among these individual differences are several concepts from organizational and consumer psychology, including emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and concepts of fairness (Bang et al., 2014; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Liu et al., 2015; Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016).

The role of fairness and customer satisfaction has not been addressed in innovative business models (Kumar & Mokhtar, 2016). However, previous research demonstrated that distributive justice is a predictor of consumer complaint intentions (Wu & Huang, 2015). Further research has shown that organizational justice plays a role in behavior demonstrated by customers regarding whether customers engaged in fair or destructive behaviors after a perceived service failure in the airline and electronics industries (Joireman et al., 2013). However, there is a gap in the research on customer behaviors after the receipt of service from corporations that utilize a platform for

customers to access their services. There is a need to expand the research to assess the services beyond the airline and electronics industries (Joireman et al., 2013).

Emotional intelligence may impact the decisions made by customers who purchase products that are accessed via technology (Ahn et al., 2016). There are four distinct areas involved in emotional intelligence, which consist of the ability to control emotions, process emotions, discern emotions, and use emotions (Krishnakumar & Rymph, 2012). Kidwell (2004) performed research on emotional intelligence of customers and the results showed customers with higher levels of emotional intelligence made better decisions regarding their selection of digital products than individuals with lower levels of emotional intelligence. There is a gap in the research on emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making as separate constructs in customer evaluations of independent providers. Segon and Booth (2015) noted emotional intelligence scales must contain ethical decision-making components. There is a gap in the research on emotional intelligence of customers and ethical decision-making as separate constructs in studies of platform business models.

Researchers have not examined the role of ethical decision-making and customer evaluations of independent providers of corporations that use platform business models. There is a need for research that addresses other risks that may occur in the outsource industry beyond the ethical behaviors of the supplier (Ndubisi et al., 2016). Moreover, the role of customer satisfaction in innovative business models has not been addressed in the research literature. There is a need for additional research that addresses after-purchase customer satisfaction (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Individuals who purchase products and

services from independent providers may choose to demonstrate unethical behavior.

Survey results obtained from participants in information technology research revealed

81% of participants would engage in unethical behavior (Bolhari et al., 2017). Based on

these findings, it is vital to explore the relationship between the emotional intelligence,

ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction of customers who receive

services from independent providers who service corporations that utilize innovative

business models. There is a need for further research on the relationship between

emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, fairness, and ethical decision-making of

customers who received services from an independent provider.

<div align="center">

Review of Research Constructs

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In this study I assessed the emotional intelligence of customers who use

innovative business model services. The relationship between four key constructs was

evaluated. Specifically, the impact of the customer's ethical decision-making, fairness,

and emotional intelligence was examined to determine whether these concepts have an

impact on the customers' ratings of satisfaction with independent service providers.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as the subtle relationship between consumer

desires and the performance of the representative of an organization from the consumers'

perspective (Sernell, 2016). Customer satisfaction is an important aspect of meeting the

needs of customers (Kim & Park, 2017). It is suggested customer satisfaction is a

systematic process which is more comprehensive than what researchers have identified in

previous research which includes interpersonal exchanges that occur during the customer and salesperson interaction, emotions, and intentions (Flint, Blocker, & Boutin, 2011).

Corporations may use various processes to assess customer satisfaction. The technological processes corporations utilize are important factors in determining customer satisfaction (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Corporations can benefit from receiving specific information on how services received by customers impact the performance of their businesses. Findings indicated service is vital to the success of internet commerce businesses (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Assessment of the perspectives of clients after they have received services or products via technology can assist organizations. There is a need for additional research that explores the results of after purchase customer satisfaction (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Customer satisfaction scales are identified in literature which can assist in examining the customer satisfaction when they evaluate independent providers from innovative business models from a research perspective. The Oliver and Swain scale was adapted by Ba and Johannson to assess customer satisfaction from recipients of services provided via the internet. This scale will allow the customers to provide their evaluations of the independent providers in a fashion that is similar to the human resource provider performance assessments that occur in traditional businesses for employees.

Customer satisfaction is an area which impacts fairness demonstrated by individuals in businesses (Bang et al., 2014). The role of customers and their contribution in the amount of fairness demonstrated in the workplace was identified in research on customer relationship management (Bang et al., 2014). There is a need to address the

amount of fairness provided by customers to service providers in the gig economy. Horne (2015) performed research on customer satisfaction in a variety of industries that did not include the gig economy.

Organizations can learn a great deal about their performance by obtaining insight from customers regarding their satisfaction with the products and services they receive. Customer satisfaction is a required aspect of measuring business performance (Dastane & Fazlin, 2017). Customers may express dissatisfaction with the products or services they have received from organizations. There is a need for studies that examine the complaint behavior of customers who use products and services offered via technology (Wu & Huang, 2015). By examining customer dissatisfaction, businesses may obtain insight regarding the need for changes in future customer and service provider interactions. Dissatisfaction may occur when customers make purchases using technology or during interactions with a representative of a corporation which requires adjustment to procedures (Wu & Huang, 2015).

Studies were performed to assess customer satisfaction in different forms of technology such as internet, mobile phone providers, and entrepreneurship (Ba & Johansson, 2008; Jasrai, 2014; McLaughlin, 2012). Research has been performed on customer satisfaction in internet platform-based organizations and findings indicated that as the service delivery processes improved on the platform customer satisfaction increased (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Moreover, findings from customers who participated in research on customer satisfaction in mobile provided services such as entertainment, education, and health indicated customers were satisfied with these services (Jasrai,

2014). There is a need to assess the performance of business owners in entrepreneurial arenas. In an entrepreneurial environment, there are a limited number of individuals who are offered the ability to assess the success of the business owner (McLaughlin, 2012).

Customer satisfaction can impact businesses in various capacities. For example, professionals in the hospitality industry have determined that worker engagement results in greater profits to the organization (Cain, Tanford, & Shulga, 2018). Businesses may obtain insight on how to focus their marketing and servicing areas based upon customer satisfaction research. Horne found companies should focus on satisfying customers with a higher profit potential rather than listening to all customer opinions in an equal manner. Expectation congruence is a result of customer satisfaction which is reflected in behaviors such as positive word-of -mouth regarding their experiences (Jack & Powers, 2013). A positive relationship exists between brand loyalty and customer satisfaction among Generation Y customers and smart phone providers (Mostert, Petzer, & Weideman, 2016). Thus, customers who utilize services offered by independent providers may offer increased revenue and profits to organizations when they are satisfied with the products and services they received.

There are other areas that may impact customer satisfaction that can be explored in further research. Customer satisfaction may be impacted by service failure which occurs during transactions involving customers who receive products or services from innovative business models and other types of businesses. Quantitative research may provide insight which addresses the psychometric aspects of customer satisfaction in business. There is a need for further research which examines customer satisfaction and

addresses reliability because the research performed only addressed the validity of the variables in the qualitative research that was performed in London on customer satisfaction, service recovery, and service failure (Ozuem, Patel, Howell, & Lancaster, 2017).

Independent providers servicing innovative business platforms may demonstrate a form of customer satisfaction that allows them to determine they should make some adaptations in the way they treat customers during service delivery. Independent providers with an awareness of customer lifetime value may determine it is necessary to alter how they serve customers for the sake of achieving customer satisfaction. Customer lifetime value is regarded as the time a customer will choose to receive products or services from an organization (Ozuem et al., 2017). Independent providers may determine they would like to retain customers and demonstrate this in their behavior that is geared towards customer satisfaction.

Customers may receive fair treatment from independent providers in the gig economy because of the desire of an independent provider to retain a customer for an extended period. The commitment of an organization to fair relationships is demonstrating foresight by looking beyond present-day benefits and creating high customer lifetime value with customers (Ozuem et al., 2017). Independent providers who lack awareness of customer retention efforts and service recovery efforts may demonstrate unfair treatment to their customers, which may negatively impact the innovative business model in which the independent provider offers services to customers. By examining fairness demonstrated by customers, it is possible to identify

how customers respond when negative events occur during service delivery from an independent provider. Moreover, the lack of personalization in service delivery may impact customer satisfaction, the amount of fairness demonstrated by customers, and ethical decision-making during customer ratings of independent providers.

There are behaviors which customers may use which can influence their interactions with service providers. Customers may have a standard script they utilize in a variety of service encounters with providers and these customers have an awareness of their role in these exchanges (Giebelhausen, Robinson, Sirianni, & Brady, 2014). The communication that occurs in the interactions service providers have with customers may impact customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction occurs when the presale expectations of customers is exceeded in the post service evaluations (Kursunluoglu, 2014). Building rapport with customers may influence how customers perceive the amount of satisfaction they experience when they receive services from independent providers who service platform-based businesses. Concerns may arise due to the use of technology during service encounters which influence the amount of customer satisfaction. Technology acts as a barrier during service encounters in which an employee fails to build rapport with customers (Giebelhausen et al., 2014). Thus, it is necessary to determine if there are issues that arise during service delivery which hinder the customer satisfaction experienced by customers when they are served in the gig economy by independent providers.

Ethical Decision-Making

Ethical decision-making is defined as the desire to do what is right in situations (Vitell & Muncy, 2005). There is a need for additional research on ethics in business because ethical behavior is a necessary aspect of effective business practices (Jones & Chin-Yen Alice, 2015). Customer (un)ethical behavior is defined as behavior that is demonstrated by customers that is assessed based upon comparing behavioral norms in society (Greenbaum et al., 2014). It is suggested from initial research that ethical decision- making may not significantly differ from other forms of decisions made by individuals that may present major opposition to the assumptions of existing ethical decision-making studies which assume that the ethical decision-making process is a unique process (Elm & Radin, 2012).

While ethical behavior is a topic that has been addressed in research around the globe, there is limited research available on ethical decision-making and customers in the United States (Chowdhury, 2017; Kumar & Mokhtar, 2016; Liu et al., 2015; Martinez & Jaeger, 2016; Sudbury-Riley, & Kohlbacher, 2016; Szmigin , Carrigan, M., & McEachern, 2009; Tangpong, Li, & Hung, 2016). Ethical behavior is something a customer is expected to demonstrate. Consumers have two primary obligations that include their duty in their interaction with a representative of the company when acquiring and disposing of their responsibility in the disposal of the products and the onus toward the globe by behaving in a manner in which no hurt is caused to the world (Vitell, 2015). Despite the ethical obligation customers have to organizations, customers may decide to make unethical choices. Cheating behavior that offer passive benefits such as

receiving too much change after a sales transaction and not informing the cashier, lying

to receive a reduced price on items for children , and buying more of an item when the

sales person calculated the price incorrectly were found in approximately 75% of

research participants in an international study of customers in the retail industry which

consisted of participants from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and

Austria (Mitchell, Balabanis, Schlegelmilch, & Cornwell, 2009).

Customers may choose to behave in an unethical manner during or after sales

transactions. For example, customers who felt they were treated in an unfair manner were

found to conduct themselves in an unethical manner by conveying hostility, placing

unreasonable demands which elevate the stress experienced by a representative, refusing

to communicate during a transaction when they are capable of expressing their concerns

by ignoring questions or opportunities to express their concerns (Agnihotri, Gabler, Itani,

Jaramillo, & Krush, 2017; Schweitzer & Gibson, 2008; Tangpong et al., 2016).

Additionally, the ethical practices of a company may determine if customer satisfaction

has occurred during a transaction and if customer retention occurs. Research on ethical

marketing practices in business and the development of a customer lifetime value

framework suggest companies that use ethical practices may retain customers and gain

consumer trust which increases customer retention (Madhani, 2016). Research indicates

that responsible decision-making resulted in a morally valuable outcome (Vriens &

Achterbergh, 2015). Businesses can predict customer lifetime value (CLV) metric by

identifying the amount of money a customer spends, how often they make purchases, and

the marketing costs required to obtain the customer (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

Researchers have indicated that there is a need for additional research to explore ethics and ethical behavior in the outsource industry which may go beyond ethical decision- making or the ethical behavior demonstrated by the supplier (Ndubisi et al., 2016). Future research should identify attributes of customers who are socially responsible as well as traits of irresponsible customers (Vitell, 2015). Additionally, it is suggested that additional studies be performed on ethical decision -making within other arenas to expand the research outside of an undergraduate sample population in the United States (Zollo, Yoon, Rialti, & Ciappei, 2018). These findings provide justification for exploring ethical decision-making in the gig economy. The research can provide findings on ethical decision-making and the impact of accurate customer feedback regarding customer satisfaction in the gig economy in the United States.

Ethical decision-making which is identified in the Muncy-Vitell (2005) Consumer Ethics Scale is the focus of this study. Muncy-Vitell (2005). Muncy and Vitell included a fifth dimension in the scale to examine the area *doing good/recycling* to their existing scale (Vitell, 2015). There are three specific categories which the Muncy-Vitell (2005) scale consists of which include downloading material which is copyrighted/purchasing counterfeit products, recycling/environmental awareness, doing the right thing/doing good.

Fairness

Fairness consists of three widely accepted components that include: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional fairness (Grover, 2014). Organizations may differ in the behavior they regard as unfair treatment of service providers. Customers may

be regarded as providing service workers with unfair treatment if they doubt their

trustworthiness or speak to them in a rude manner (van Jaarsveld, Restubog, Walker, &

Amarnani, 2015). Businesses may develop policies on how they treat customers who are

unfair to their independent providers or employees. Organizations have been known to

fire their customers for providing unfair treatment to service workers as a means of

offering support for providing good customer service and not tolerating poor treatment of

workers (van Jaarsveld et al., 2015). Customers may choose to conduct themselves in a

fair manner when assessing the services of any company, and this includes independent

providers. Customers may choose not to evaluate independent providers in a fair manner

based upon their desire to cause harm to independent providers or their own person

decision to behave in a defiant manner.

Research on retaliatory behavior and fairness found women were more prone to

retaliate than men (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Customers who had a desire to reconcile

the relationship with an organization were found to engage in reparatory behaviors

(Joireman et al., 2013). Some customers may choose to demonstrate unfair behaviors

based upon their own desire to harm independent providers. Customers may choose not

to evaluate independent providers in a fair manner based upon their desire to cause harm

to independent providers or their own personal decision to behave in a defiant manner.

Additionally, individuals who behave in a poor manner may lack awareness of more

suitable behaviors made by other individuals in similar situations (Sheldon et al., 2014).

There are behaviors customers can demonstrate which are socially acceptable by

providers in business interactions which are regarded as fair. The fairness demonstrated

by customers during service encounters can motivate independent providers to remain in business and result in better customer service experiences. Customers can gain insight on appropriate behaviors used to demonstrate fairness.

The Joireman, Grégoire, Devezer, and Tripp (2013) Customer Model is the model of fairness selected for the research study. Joireman, Grégoire, Devezer, and Tripp's 2013 Customer Model was designed to assess a customer's desire for revenge or reconciliation after they have received services from an organization. The model consists of 7-point Likert questions with items which range from (1=strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree) (Joireman et al., 2013). This framework assesses how customers were treated during a service encounter and their responses to the encounter which allowed participants to self-report if they sought revenge through complaining or negative word of mouth or if they demonstrated reparatory behavior. Findings indicated customers were prone to treat representatives from airline companies in a fair manner when they were made aware of issues which impacted the delivery of services (Joireman et al., 2013). Customers were prone to engage in behavior which demonstrated fairness such as forgiveness when there were issues with the services they received from an airline if they perceived that the organization had a sincere desire to please them despite concerns with the service they were provided (Joireman et al., 2013).

Emotions

Emotions contribute to the emotional intelligence of individuals (Wisker & Poulis, 2015). Research on the topic of emotional intelligence is based upon the general viewpoint that individuals vary in their emotional abilities (Elfenbein, Barsade, &

Eisenkraft, 2015). There are a variety of visible ways a person can show their emotions in addition to their facial expressions (Mayer, DiPaolo, Salovey, 1990). Research on emotions suggest that people may follow rules regarding how they demonstrate emotions in social interactions with others (Moran, Diefendorff, & Greguras, 2013). There are situations in which individuals may choose not to demonstrate their positive emotions such as when they win in a performance context to not appear inconsiderate of other individuals (Greenaway, Kalokerinos, Murphy, & McIlroy, 2018). Customer emotions may contribute to how they regard independent providers. When selling products and services, providers can elicit emotions in their customers (Mangus, Bock, Jones, & Folse, 2017). There are instances in which individuals may choose to use their emotions in a way that causes harm to people because using emotions to guide decisions do not always result in individuals making good decisions (Alkozei, Schwab, & Killgore, 2016). Additionally, individuals may experience anxiety or stress in situations and lack training that can assist them in managing their negative emotions which may include the use of humor (Connor & Slear, 2009). Moreover, some individuals may regulate their emotions and choose the location where they choose to express their positive or negative emotions (Eldesouky & English, 2018). Also, the ability individuals have to control, experience, and feel emotions should impact their ethical decision-making (Chowdhury, 2017).

Emotional Intelligence

The topic of intelligence encompasses various types of intelligence. Intelligence was primarily evaluated based upon the intellectual capacity of individuals throughout history (Goleman, Barlow, & Bennett, 2010). Biopsychological potential an individual

may utilize to decipher data which may be initiated in a cultural environment to respond to issues or develop products within a culture is regarded as a definition of intelligence (Gardner & Moran, 2006). Gardner examined multiple intelligences beyond the intellectual quotient (IQ) which expanded on views which existed throughout the 20th century (Goleman et al., 2010). Multiple intelligence theory was introduced to the world in Howard Gardner's book *Frames of Mind* written in 1983 (Gardner & Moran, 2006). One of these multiple intelligences is the concept of emotional intelligence.

The topic of emotional intelligence was once regarded as a fad but has since earned the respect of psychologists and the business world (Ackely, 2016). According to Daniel Goldman, there are multiple definitions of emotional intelligence (Big Think, 2012). Some define emotional intelligence as the ability to manage emotions of self and coworkers in an organization (Gorgi, 2013). Individuals may not work in the same context and definitions of emotional intelligence outside of the scope of an environment take on a more inclusive perspective by defining emotional intelligence as simply the ability to manage the emotions of self and others (Mayer et al., 1990; Trejo, 2016). Other researchers have considered emotional intelligence within the parameters of a particular occupation such as salesperson emotional intelligence addressed later in this chapter (Griffin, 2013; Hill, Bush, Vorhies, & King, 2017; Patranabis & Banerjee, 2012; Reid, 2015; Trejo, 2016).

Emotional intelligence is developed and starts with self-awareness and grows as individuals gain the skills to network and socialize with others and maintain relationships (Haime, 2011). Emotional intelligence consists of emotional aspects such as competency,

maturity, and regulation (Patranabis & Banerjee, 2012). Literature on the topic of emotional intelligence is primarily classified by three models which include the trait model, ability model, and the mixed model (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011). The type of emotional intelligence addressed in this study is consumer emotional intelligence which is identified later in this chapter.

Emotional intelligence is primarily recognized by the psychologist Daniel Goleman's model which is The Emotional Competency Framework and consists of personal competencies which identify self-awareness and social competencies that address how individuals manage relationship (Jacka, 2018). Emotional intelligence is an area of intelligence that was explored by Daniel Goleman in 1995 in his book entitled *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ*, which addressed the emotional aspect of intelligence to partially explain why individuals with IQs were more successful than individuals with lower IQs (Goleman et al., 2010).

There are multiple factors which are associated with emotional intelligence of individuals. Positive factors such as an environment of trust and healthy risk-taking were attributed to emotional intelligence (Resnick, 2016). Studies have shown the connection between personality and emotional intelligence, as the general factor of personality (GFP) and strongly overlapped by trait emotional intelligence (Van der Linden, 2017). The GFP is a construct which is evident at the pinnacle of the Big Five (Burns, Morris, Periard, LaHuis, Flannery, Carretta, & Roebke, 2017). The Big Five consists of openness, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability (van der Linden et al., 2017). For a construct to be regarded as an intelligence, an area should address

specific aspects of the construct; thus, in the case of emotional intelligence three areas

that must be addressed include emotional abilities, mental performance, and similar

aspects of emotions (Mayer, Caruso, & Salvoney, 1999). For example, one model of

emotional intelligence consists of three areas, including emotional perception, cognitive

awareness of emotions, and emotional regulation (Chen & Jaramillo, 2014).

Emotional Intelligence in Sales Professionals

Researchers have examined emotional intelligence for incumbents in a variety of

occupations such as medical sales, technology sales, and other professions (Griffin, 2013;

Hill et al., 2017; Patranabis & Banerjee, 2012; Reid, 2015; Trejo, 2016). Emotional

intelligence and creativity are major contributors to job performance and job satisfaction

in sales professionals (Lassk & Shepherd, 2013). Emotional intelligence was found to

have tremendous influence on the performance of sales professionals in the insurance

industry in India--elaborate (Patranabis & Banerjee, 2012). Additionally, salesperson

emotional intelligence was found to influence customer outcomes such as the

salesperson-owned loyalty which occurs when a salesperson modifies his behavior to

satisfy customer expectations and managing emotions during interactions with clients

(Chen & Jaramillo, 2014). A salesperson's ability to improvise was found to impact the

relationship that exists between emotional intelligence and team presentation results on

sales teams (Hill et al., 2017).

Individuals may not have an accurate perspective of their level of emotional

intelligence (Ahn et al., 2016). Participants in prior research were found to overestimate

their perspective of their level of emotional intelligence (Sheldon et al., 2014).

Perceptions of emotional intelligence influence the behavior of individuals (Elfenbein et al., 2015). Individuals who lack proficiency in emotional intelligence may not seek training to increase their skills in this area (Sheldon et al., 2014). Individuals who are emotionally intelligent express their anger in a manner regarded as socially appropriate (van der Linden et al., 2017). Individuals who are emotionally intelligent demonstrate forgiveness (Mugrane, 2014).

Emotional intelligence has been studied in the context of business and sales also. Findings indicate emotional intelligence has an impact on the performance of sales professionals (Reid, 2015). Additionally, sales performance was found to be significantly related to emotional intelligence in the financial services industry (Enhelder, 2011). Moreover, findings indicated Branch 3 of emotional intelligence is a predictor of sales manager performance which is understanding emotions (Griffin, 2013). Findings indicated gratitude behaviors are contagious based which was a consequence of gratitude-motivated behaviors in sales representatives (Mangus et al., 2017).

Every individual despite their occupation has encountered someone with a high level of emotional intelligence and someone with a low level of emotional intelligence (Resnick, 2016). Emotionally intelligent individuals can obtain and utilize information from their own emotions and those of other individuals which produce rewarding results (Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha, & Sheng, 2011). The emotional intelligence ratings of self- and observers found in research participants was significant but moderate in MBA students (Elfenbein et al., 2015). Regression research on the emotional intelligence of

graduate students showed participants overestimated their emotional intelligence based upon the performance levels (Sheldon et al., 2014).

Consumer Emotional Intelligence

In this study I will focus on customer emotional intelligence (CEI). While there are a variety of measures that assess emotional intelligence in individuals, there are limited measures used in research that assess consumers (Ackley, 2016; Kidwell, 2004). Customer emotional intelligence is an area that has not been widely researched (Park, 2013). CEI is a newly developed area in which customer ability in addressing emotions that take place in the process of making purchases for products and services is assessed (Ahn et al., 2016).

The Consumer Emotional Ability Scale (CEAS) was used in studies which involved validation of the instrument, examining areas in which emotions were involved in consumer purchases, and assessing food choices made by customers (Kidwell, 2004). Marketing research has not addressed the role of CEI and performance (Kidwell et al., 2008). Instruments such as the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) shows the areas of emotional intelligence which individuals may need to develop (Ackley, 2016). The CEAS is an instrument that was developed using experts in the field of emotions to provide correct responses during dissertation research performed by Kidwell to give insight on the emotional intelligence of consumers in a study consisting of 100 undergraduate student participants from a southeastern university in the United States. It serves as an extension of the Mayer- Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) rather than a replacement of the instrument.

After the development of the CEAS, additional research was performed on consumer emotional intelligence. The Consumer Emotional Intelligence Scale was created to assess the ability of customers in utilizing emotional information (Kidwell, Hardesty, & Childers, 2008). The CEIS was utilized in research to address emotional areas not identified in the MSCEIT in a concise measure that is easy to administer to participants (Kidwell et al., 2008).

Further research was performed by Ahn, Sung, and Drumwright (2016) on customer emotional intelligence in the banking industry in which 122 undergraduate college students were sampled to complete the 2008 CEIS developed by Kidwell et al. This study offers insight on customer behavior when addressing conflict in sales transactions. It is implied that consumer emotional intelligence provides insight on why some customers behave in a devastating manner when there are conflicts and other customers behave in a helpful manner (Ahn et al., 2016).

Kidwell's (2008) CEI is the type of emotional intelligence which is emphasized in this study. The CEIS is similar to Kidwell's (2004) CEAS consists of four branches which include perceiving emotions, facilitating emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Kidwell et al, 2008). The CEIS was developed to assess food choices of consumers utilizing Virginia Tech undergraduate student research participants (Kidwell et al., 2008). Additionally, Kidwell performed research on the emotional intelligence of customers in their daily lives. Customers with low emotional intelligence are prone to behave in a manner that causes harm or damage to individuals (Ahn et al., 2016).

There is a need for research on CEI in the gig economy. Currently, emotional intelligence is considered a necessary aspect in every arena of life (Thompson, 2018). There is no research available on the CEI of customers who purchase products and services from independent service providers. Individuals can have their level of emotional intelligence evaluated to determine areas of strengths or weaknesses based upon the instruments that exist to assess emotional intelligence and there are multiple ways used to assess emotional intelligence which may include self-reported evaluations of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 1999). Thus, there is a need to determine how customers assess their emotional intelligence after they have purchased products and services from independent providers of platform-based corporations. The lack of emotional intelligence customers possess may cause these individuals to demonstrate negative behavioral and emotional responses (Levit, 2009).

Summary and Conclusions

Researchers have performed a limited amount of research on emotional intelligence to develop a framework for CEI such as Kidwell's (2004) emotional intelligence model of customer emotional intelligence. Customer fairness may influence the ratings they provide to independent providers during performance evaluations. This research study will explore the relationship between CEI, fairness, and ethical decision-making of customers during their performance evaluations. The relationship between justice and emotional intelligence was explored in research and a relationship was found between emotional intelligence and improvement of justice (Braithwaite, 2006). While the impact of emotional intelligence and justice has been explored in research, restorative

justice is typically not examined in research. There is a need for additional research on emotional intelligence and restorative justice (Braithwaite, 2006). This study is the first to research the social perception of emotional intelligence from observer ratings (Elfenbein et al., 2015).

The literature review for the proposed study addressed the areas which may impact customer satisfaction which include customer emotional intelligence, and customer ethical decision-making, and fairness. These areas may impact the customer satisfaction which occurs in the gig economy. There is a need to address these factors in the gig economy. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of customer emotional intelligence, ethical-decision-making, and fairness in the gig economy as they pertain to customer satisfaction. The role of these areas in the gig economy may enhance social change by providing independent service providers with insight regarding the perception of their performance from the perspective of customers who have performed evaluations.

The research design and instruments used in the study to address customer satisfaction, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer emotional intelligence are outlined in Chapter 3. The methods utilized to sample the research population are addressed as well as identification of the population. Ethical issues and threats to validity are addressed in the Chapter 3. The findings of the research are addressed in Chapter 4. A discussion of the research data is provided. The writing concludes with implications for future research and possible impact of the findings to society and social change conclude the research study in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In this chapter I review the research methods that I selected and address issues such as the selection of the participants and the assessments chosen for this study to operationalize the variables of interest. The procedures that were chosen for this study are addressed as well as the confidentiality provided to the research participants. The participants chosen for this study were individuals who utilized service from independent providers from platform-based businesses. During the selection process, participants self-identified as individuals who had purchased products or services from an independent provider of a platform-based business. This study was quantitative in nature, and the research questions were answered using multiple regression analysis. The regression analysis allowed me to determine whether the predictor variables (emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making) had a statistically significant relationship with customer satisfaction ratings, which was the dependent variable.

Research Design and Rationale

I used a quantitative design for this study. This study was consistent with the current quantitative research on the influence of fairness, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making on the customer satisfaction ratings of customers who receive services from innovative businesses. The independent or predictor variables selected for the study were emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness. The dependent variable was customer satisfaction ratings. Data from self-report surveys obtained from research participants who had used the services of independent providers were used to test the hypotheses. The independent variables were analyzed using linear

regression to determine whether these variables predicted customer satisfaction ratings. Moreover, the variables for RQ2 were entered in a step-wise manner for the linear regression analysis to determine whether there was an increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings (Wang-Jones et al., 2017).

Methodology

Population

The sample population for the study was adults 18 years and older who had utilized a platform-based business. Additionally, the adults must have provided evaluations of an independent provider after they purchased products or services from this representative. It was necessary for the sample population to contain individuals who had provided evaluations to determine the fairness and ethical decision-making provided by the sample population. Moreover, the emotional intelligence of the customers was assessed in terms of how this relates to the research questions identified for the study.

Sampling

A convenience sampling plan was used for this research project, which consisted of soliciting individuals from a variety of sources for participation in the study. Individuals were solicited from places located on the internet such as social media sites that included Facebook and LinkedIn professional networking groups. I sent a request to solicit members of online groups to group leaders of these online social media groups to recruit participants who met the criteria for the study. Individuals selected to participate in the study were provided a unique indicator or unique identifier to gather the data from each of the participants. I used snowball sampling to obtain as many eligible participants

as possible to participate in the study. The snowball sampling technique was utilized in emotional intelligence research in which participants were assessed to determine how they responded after a service failure occurred in Korea and the United States (Park, 2013).

There were various steps followed to select participants for the study. Research participants received an informed consent letter in which the participants were provided with details regarding the voluntary nature of the study. Participants provided me with their consent before data collection occurred.

The sample size was based on an alpha value of .05 and a medium effect size derived from prior studies. There were three predictor variables for the study. I used the effect size for Jasrai (2014) in the G*Power statistical calculator for a linear multiple regression fixed model $R2$ increase (see Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). Moreover, a sample size of 100-200 was recommended in the Kidwell article and Jasrai article. Therefore, a minimum sample of 200 was proposed for the study.

Assessments

There were assessments selected to address the research questions selected for the study. Assessments were used to measure customer emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, ethical decision-making, and fairness. The next sections address the assessments and provide details regarding the psychometric properties of each instrument.

Customer Emotional Intelligence Scale

The instrument chosen to assess customer emotional intelligence was the Kidwell et al. (2008) CEIS. The CEIS consists of 18 items including five items for perceiving emotions, four items for facilitating emotions, five items for understanding emotions, and four items for managing emotions (Kidwell et al., 2008). The CEIS is scored by taking the summative score for each dimension and obtaining the overall score by summing each dimension (CEIS, 2007). The split-half reliability of the CEIS is .83 (Kidwell et al., 2008). A validation study of the measure consisted of 219 student participants from the University of Kentucky (Kidwell et al., 2008). The discriminate validity was assessed using the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; $r = .06$, $p > .05$; Kidwell et al., 2008). Compulsive consumption is the area used to assess the nomological validity of the CEIS (Kidwell et al., 2008). Evaluation of nomological validity occurred by examination of an emotional ability criterion measure (Kidwell, 2008). Sample CEIS questions include "How useful might it be to feel frustration when purchasing something expensive and interacting with an incompetent salesperson?" and "How useful might it be to feel hostility when interacting with an aggressive/pushy salesperson at an auto dealership?" (CEIS, 2007).

Customer Satisfaction Scale

Ba and Johansson's (2008) Customer Satisfaction Scale was chosen to assess customer satisfaction in the study. The scale consists of one binary question to assess whether the customer was successful in obtaining the product, 36 items on a 7-point Likert scale to assess the six constructs, and 11 demographic items (Ba & Johansson,

2008). The six constructs include customer satisfaction, perceived control, ease of use, service value, interactivity, and perceived electronic service delivery system (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Scoring of the Customer Satisfaction Scale consists of compiling the summative score for each index (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Sample items from the scale include questions adapted from Oliver and Swan's scale such as "I was unhappy with the online experience" and "I was very unhappy with the online experience" (Ba & Johansson, 2008).

Psychometric Properties

The reliability of the scale is .77 for the revised model of the scale, which consists of 22 items for the final measurement model (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The reliability of the instrument was determined for each of the constructs, which indicated the following Cronbach's alpha values: customer satisfaction scale 0.869, perceived control reliability 0.770, ease of use 0.766, service value 0.629, interactivity 0.739, and perceived electronic service delivery system process 0.824 (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The chi-square test was significant at .05 level for each of the pairs, which provided evidence of discriminant validity. The chi-square test is a method used to test the null hypothesis regarding the appropriateness of the model (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The chi-square test was used to provide further evidence of discriminant validity for perceived ease of use and service value constructs because, of the six constructs, these two constructs failed the variance extraction with low scores; .374 was the variance extracted for service value and .463 for perceived ease of use (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The study consisted of 149 undergraduate and graduate MBA students from a private university in the United States in which the

shopping experiences of the students with six online platform retailers were assessed (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The reliability and validity of the constructs were confirmed, and the revised model was finalized for use (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Customer satisfaction increased as the ease of use of the platform and process improvement occurred (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The reliability of the customer satisfaction construct for the instrument had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.869 (Ba & Johansson, 2008). The final confirmatory factor analysis indicated a good model fit for each construct in the scale (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Construct validity was evident in the revised model and means for the criteria for the revised model CFI = 0.993, RMSEA= 0.058, NFI==0.979, GFI=0.984, and AGFI= 0.932 (Ba & Johansson, 2008). Customer satisfaction in the current study was assessed using the customer satisfaction construct items SAT1, SAT2, SAT3, SAT4, SAT5, and SAT6 (see Ba & Johansson, 2008).

Consumer Ethics Scale

The Muncy-Vitell (2005) Consumer Ethics Scale (CES) was selected to assess the ethical decision-making of customers in the current study. The CES contains 31 items that identify ethical decisions and omissions that identify areas the consumer feels are wrong or acceptable (Cherry & Caldwell, 2013). The CES items are responded to using a 7-point Likert scale with items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Two items added to the latest version of the scale are reverse scored. Muncy and Vitell originally created their scale in 1992 and updated the scale in 2005 (Vitell, 2015). The CES has three items to assess doing the right thing in each participant. The new version of the scale assesses the ethical choices of the consumer and addresses positive aspects of

ethical decision-making (Vitell, 2015). Muncy and Vitell's 2005 scale was used in the validation of a general consumer unethical behavior scale (Greenbaum et al., 2014). Scoring of the scale consists of item means and *t*-test scores for the student and nonstudent participants (Muncy & Vitell, 2005). Cronbach's alpha values for the CES commonly fall within the range of .66 to .85 (Cherry & Caldwell, 2013). Student and nonstudent participants were assessed using the CES for each of the questions, where 1 = strongly believe it is not wrong to 5 = strongly believe it is wrong (Muncy & Vitell, 2005). There were two propositions tested using the new items in the CES in the experiment, which included testing the difference between 85 students and 96 nonstudents. Proposition 1 of the study addressed whether the students would differ from nonstudents on the CES in the rewards they receive from unethical behavior. Proposition 1 addressed each of the original and new items; Proposition 2 addressed the students and nonstudents on their attitude toward business and the six-item scale to determine whether students demonstrated a more negative attitude toward business (Muncy & Vitell, 2005). No holistic difference was found between the students' and the nonstudents' attitude toward business; therefore, findings were not supported for Proposition 2 for a difference between students and nonstudent in the adult population (Muncy & Vitell, 2005). There were scales used to identify unethical behavior from the Muncy-Vitell (2005) scale, which defined unethical behavior as actively benefiting from illegal actions (ACT), passively benefiting (PAS), questionable but legal actions (QUEST), and media downloading (DL) (Egan, Hughes, & Palmer, 2015). Sample items from the CES scale include "Not purchasing products from companies that you believe don't treat their

employees fairly" and "Retuning to the store and paying for an item that the cashier mistakenly did not charge you for" (Muncy & Vitell, 2005). Findings of the research provided support for Proposition 1 (Muncy & Vitell, 2005). The CES is regarded as reliable and valid (Egan et al., 2015). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the CES and $X2 = 415.79$ and each T value $> = 1.96$ (Cherry & Caldwell, 2013). For the current study I used the PAS, QUEST, and DL scales to assess the ethical decision-making in the customers (see Muncy & Vitell, 2005).

Fairness Scale

Researchers have used various approaches to examine justice theory. Ponterotto et al. (2013) used a mixed-methods approach to conduct research on social justice theory. Moreover, research on social justice theory was performed to examine employee satisfaction with internet policies using quantitative methods (Grover, 2014). Findings indicated research participants had positive responses in situations in which they believed the policies were fair, and more satisfaction occurred when policies were developed and implemented in a relaxed environment and monitored from a remote site and multiple methods were used to implement the policies rather than using immediate termination of individuals (Grover, 2014). Other studies suggested there is a new cognitive process used that addresses the motives of the firm and impacts the customer responses occurring after a service deviation occurs (Joireman et al., 2013).

I used Joireman et al.'s (2013) Fairness Scale to assess the fairness demonstrated by customers who participate in the study. There were multiple scales used in the research performed by Joireman et al. on customer fairness. The scales in the research

were 7-point Likert scales unless otherwise noted. The scales consist of Blame attribution, Failure severity, Procedural fairness, Interactional fairness, Distributive fairness, inferred firm motives, Anger, Desire for revenge, Desire for reconciliation, Retaliatory behaviors which consist of: Vindictive complaining and Third-party complaining for negative publicity, Negative word -of-mouth, Reparatory behavior which consists of: Scoring of Joireman et al.'s 2013 Fairness Scale consists determining the means for each of the constructs. There were 432 undergraduate student participants in the study scales to assess negative motives, anger, desire for revenge, desire for reconciliation, retaliatory behavior, and reparatory behavior were assessed to determine the construct validity of the scales (Joireman et al., 2013). Customers who perceive positive motives from organizations after mistakes occur may engage in positive behaviors. Customers who perceive positive motives from organizations after double deviations occur are prone to demonstrate reparatory behaviors rather than seek revenge (Joireman et al, 2013). The reliability of the scale was provided for each of the constructs selected for the proposed research study. The alpha values for Procedural fairness ranged from .70 to 0.83, Distributive fairness ranged from .92 to 0.96 (Joireman et al., 2013). Convergent validity for the instrument was identified by the average variance extracted for each construct which was greater than .50 (Joireman et al., 2013). Based upon my research I will evaluate procedural, interactional, and distributive justice (Joireman et al., 2013).

Psychometric Properties

The reliability and validity of the items in the scales were evaluated to assess the

psychometric properties of the scales, as well as the convergent and discriminant validity

of each construct (Joireman et al., 2013). Composite reliability of the scales was .70 in all

instances of the evaluation (Joireman et al., 2013). The psychometric properties of the

scale was examined and all constructs demonstrated suitable convergent validity with

significant λs (*ps* < .001) (Joireman et al., 2013). The average variance which was

extracted was more than .50 which provided support for convergent validity (Joireman et

al., 2013). Sample items include: "During the incident I wanted to", I complained to the

firm to" (Joireman et al., 2013).

Demographic Survey

During the initial phase of the study research participants will provide information

regarding their specific demographic criteria. The specific aspects of demographics

which the participants will respond to include their age, gender, ethnicity, and

educational level achieved by the participant. The demographic survey is the first survey

participants will respond to during the data collection phase which will be accessed

online through an online survey platform. Research participants will receive an internet

link which allows them to respond to the each of the surveys utilized in the study.

<div align="center">

Data Collection

</div>

Customers who have received services or purchased products from independent

providers from platform businesses will complete survey via an online survey platform.

Each participant received an informed consent letter provided online before they begin

the survey. Consent will be assumed by continuing the survey. Each participant

completed the survey and return this documentation to me via the online survey site.

Each participant will receive a prompt that asks them to evaluate an experience that was

less than ideal when they evaluate the independent provider. The committee members

received a link on Survey Monkey to determine that the prompt is stated appropriately

before data collection occurs.

Data Analysis Plan

I used SPSS to analyze the data received from the research participants.

Demographic data was examined to describe the sample, and to determine how similar

the sample is to the population of interest. I assessed the relationships between the

predictor variables which include emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-

making and the criterion variable which is customer satisfaction for this study.

Evaluation of the data will occur to examine the assumptions of multiple

regression. Two assumptions of multiple regression analysis are the assumption of

homogeneity of variance and assumption of normality (Aguinis, Petersen, & Pierce,

1999; Wang-Jones et al., 2017; Williams, Gómez Grajales, & Kurkiewicz, 2013). It is

assumed the model is linear within the parameters of the regression (Williams et al.,

2013). There are four assumptions pertaining to the model errors for multiple regression:

The error should have a zero-conditional mean; independence of errors; homogeneity of

variance (homoscedasticity; and normal distribution of errors (Williams et al., 2013).

RQ1: Are ratings of customer satisfaction of independent providers impacted by customer emotional intelligence, fairness orientation, and ethical decision-making orientation?

H_o1_1: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by customer emotional intelligence.

H_a1_1: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by customer emotional intelligence.

H_o1_2: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by fairness orientation.

H_a1_2: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by fairness orientation.

H_o1_3: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by ethical decision-making orientation.

H_a1_3: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by ethical decision-making orientation.

To test RQ1 regression analysis will be used to predict customer satisfaction of adult customers who use innovative model services from each of the predictor variables, specifically, emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making. Data from the Consumer Emotional Intelligence Scale (CEIS), Ba and Johansson's (2008) Customer Satisfaction Scale, The Muncy-Vitell Consumer Ethics Scale (2005), and Joireman et al.'s 2013 Fairness Scale will be used.

RQ2: When combined in a single analysis, does the inclusion of emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethics account for significantly more incremental variance in customer satisfaction ratings than any of the predictors in isolation?

H_o2: There is no increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings.

H_a2: There is an increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings.

RQ2 will similarly be evaluated using multiple regression, here all the predictor variables will be used to predict customer satisfaction of adult customers who use innovative model services from independent providers.

RQ3: When combined does distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice impact customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation?

H_o3: There is no combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation.

H_a3: There is a combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation.

RQ3 will be examined using multiple regression, the types of fairness demonstrated in Joireman et al.'s 2013 Fairness Scale will be used to determine if the type of fairness demonstrated by customers predicts the customer satisfaction of the adult customers who use innovative model services from independent providers.

Threats to Validity

Threats to validity may occur due to the self-report nature of the study because participants will provide the data used. Participants will provide responses to research questions and they may choose to discontinue the study at any time during the data collection process which may result in some form of attrition issues with the data. Lack of complete responses from research participants may not allow for complete data or complete results to be gathered. The incomplete data may not allow me to determine customer satisfaction impact for each group. In addition, if respondents are not honest in their responding this may impact the validity of the data. Participants in research studies may lie and lack awareness of when the lie is told in research causes them harm and they may refrain from sharing accurate information or share details in an effort to provide valid information for the study (Largent & Fernandez Lynch, 2017). Finally, because it is a sample of convenience the results may not generalize to the population of interest.

Statistical validity is an area which may present concern in research studies. The sample size selected for this study for the alpha =.05 with a medium effect size was selected to control for statistical validity. Sample size recommendations for the study control for the statistical validity (Jasari, 2014; Kidwell, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

The research participants received information on informed consent to determine if they desire to participate in the study. The informed consent document is contained in Appendix E. Documentation such as procedures for the study, the purpose of the study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) information from Walden University which documents

that the university participated and approved the study was provided to the research

participants. The IRB approval number for this study is 02-04-19-0189116. Contact

information that research participants may utilize should they have questions regarding

the study will also be included in the ethical information provided to research participants

prior to providing consent for the study. Additionally, research participants received

information on how they may contact Walden University if they desire additional

information after they have completed the surveys during the data collection phase of the

research project. The study occurred in a manner in which there was limited risk to

research participants. The Office of Health and Human Services defines minimal risk as

the probability the amount of discomfort study participants can experience is lower than

the amount of risk they could experience in their daily lives or when participating in

physical or mental tests (HHS Protection of Human Subjects, 2009).

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

A quantitative research design was used in this research study to examine the

factors that determine the customer satisfaction which occurs in the gig economy when

customers use services of independent providers. The research questions assessed the

fairness, ethical decision-making, and emotional intelligence of customers using justice

theory. The survey was distributed to my social media profiles and online groups using a

link to the online survey site. SPSS was used to collect data from participants after IRB

approval was obtained which determined that participants would not experience harm

from participation.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction of customers who received services provided by an independent provider from a company that utilizes an innovative business model. The study was performed to contribute to the literature on the gig industry in the field of industrial/organizational psychology (see Bergman & Jean, 2016). Moreover, this study added to the research on customer satisfaction to determine which factors impact customer satisfaction to a larger extent in an independent manner or combined. Data were collected from customers who were at least 18 years old residing in the United States who received services from an independent provider servicing a platform-based business. I performed a multiple regression analysis on the data collected testing three research questions. The first research question addressed the relationship between fairness orientation, ethical decision-making, and emotional intelligence of customers who received services from gig economy independent providers. The second research question addressed the change in customer satisfaction based on the fairness orientation, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making used by customers when they rate independent providers in the gig economy. The third research question addressed whether there was a combined influence of the different types of fairness on customer satisfaction.

The first part of this chapter addresses the data collection procedures that were used to obtain research participants for the study, the demographic characteristics of participants, and the statistical assumptions of the research. Next, the measures used in

the study are described along with the descriptive statistics for the study variables. Lastly, the multiple regression technique that was used is documented and the research questions, hypotheses, and findings are addressed.

Data Collection

There were various steps that were taken to collect data from volunteer research participants. The study was posted on social media sites and in online groups to solicit participants for the study. Additionally, the Walden University participant pool was used to collect data. Data collection was stopped at 19 participants after 6 months of data collection. The participants in the study were men and women who were at least 18 years of age. Volunteers who composed the final sample completed the Customer Satisfaction Scale, Consumer Ethics Scale, Fairness Scale, and Consumer Emotional Intelligence Scale. Participants completed each of the questions. The participants who did not complete the entire study were omitted from the final sample and the results of the study.

Data Collection Discrepancies

There were discrepancies in the data collection plan that was created for the study. The response rate of volunteers was low, which prevented me from obtaining the number of volunteers that was desired to participate in the study. Participants were recruited using the Walden University participant pool. My personal social media channels also were used to solicit participants. Due to the low response rates, online groups were solicited based on the posting guidelines that were approved by the Walden University IRB. Although a snowball sampling technique was used, it did not yield the number of participants that was desired for the study. The snowball sampling technique allowed

participants to share the post with their followers on their social media channels, but the level of participation did not substantially increase using this method. The data collection process for the study stopped after 6 months due to the limited number of participants who volunteered to complete the study and the considerable amount of time that the study was open to receive respondents. Although the number of participants who began the survey was 26, 19 participants completed the survey.

Sample Demographic Characteristics

The only demographic characteristics that were requested from the participants were the screening items, which included that they were at least 18 years of age, lived in the United States, and received services from an independent provider in the gig economy.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics of the scales used in this study. The CEIS was used to assess the emotional intelligence of the participants. Customer emotional intelligence was the least reliable (Cronbach's alpha of .06). Cronbach's alpha values greater than .70 are deemed reliable. The Muncy-Vitell (2005) Consumer Ethics Scale was used to assess the ethical decision-making in the participants. The Cronbach's alpha value for ethical decision-making was reliable (.86). Joireman et al.'s (2013) Fairness Scale was used to assess fairness of participants. The Cronbach's alpha for fairness was reliable (.91). The Procedural Fairness Scale was used to assess fairness. Ba and Johansson's (2008) Customer Satisfaction Scale was used to assess customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction had a Cronbach's alpha of .46 and was not reliable.

Participants came from a variety of backgrounds based on the data collection methods that were used to recruit research participants. Participation was requested from the general public via social media platforms and online groups that consisted of individuals from various educational backgrounds and ethnic groups. Although individuals were solicited from the general population, some groups that were solicited consisted of people with bachelor's degrees or individuals who were pursing graduate degrees such as a master's degree or a doctoral degree in different fields of study.

External Validity

Due to the number of research participants who responded to the research study request, the study did not consist of individuals from each of the 50 states in the United States. Therefore, the study results are not generalizable. External validity, also known as generalizability, indicates that the study results can extend beyond the population that was included in the present study (Aronow & Samii, 2016).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Outcome Variables

Variable	*N* of Items	*Add* Reliability estimates	*M*	*SD*
Customer Satisfaction	5	.45	18.95	3.96
Customer Emotional Intelligence	17	.10	5.43	1.10
Fairness Total	9	.91	44.84	9.92
Interactional	3	.84	15.95	2.99
Distributive	3		14.89	4.16
Procedural	3	.57	14.0	3.37
Ethical Decision-Making	13	.86	29.37	8.60

Note. N= number of items in the instrument

Statistical Assumptions

Preliminary analyses were performed to assess whether the assumptions of outliers, multicollinearity, linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence of residual were met; there were violations noted. However, to offset any potential influence of assumptions violations, 2,000 bootstrapping samples were calculated, and 95% confidence intervals based on the bootstrap samples were reported where appropriate.

Prior to examining the research questions, the assumptions for linear regression were examined. Multicollinearity testing was performed on the Customer Emotional Intelligence Scale, Muncy-Vitell (2005) Consumer Ethics Scale, Joireman et al.'s (2013) Fairness Scale, and Ba and Johansson's (2008) Customer Satisfaction Scale using SPSS. Multicollinearity was tested by examining a scatterplot graph. Additionally, Pearson correlations were examined for each of the variables, and the assumption was met because there were no correlations with a value of $r = .70$ or greater.

Findings With Research Questions and Hypotheses

There were various methods used to analyze the data of this quantitative study. Correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to examine the relationship between the research variables in this study: customer satisfaction, ethical decision-making, emotional intelligence, and fairness. The first research question addressed each of the variables in the study to examine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable:

RQ1: Are ratings of customer satisfaction of independent providers impacted by customer emotional intelligence, fairness orientation, and ethical decision-making orientation?

H_o1_1: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by customer emotional intelligence.

H_a1_1: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by customer emotional intelligence.

H_o1_2: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by fairness orientation.

H_a1_2: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by fairness orientation.

H_o1_3: Customer satisfaction ratings are not significantly predicted by ethical decision-making orientation.

H_a1_3: Customer satisfaction ratings are significantly predicted by ethical decision-making orientation.

The first research question addressed whether customer emotional intelligence, fairness orientation, and ethical decision-making orientation were related to customer satisfaction ratings the participants gave independent service providers. A correlation analysis was performed to test the hypotheses in this research question. A correlation analysis was performed with customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer satisfaction. The results showed that there was a nonsignificant negative correlation between customer ethical decision-making and customer satisfaction

$r(18) = -.25$, $p = .308$. There was a nonsignificant positive correlation between distributive fairness and customer satisfaction $r(18) =.24$, $p= .332$. There was a nonsignificant positive correlation between interactional fairness and customer satisfaction $r(18)$ -.11, $p = .647$. The results showed there was a nonsignificant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction $r(18) = .31$, $p = .199$. As a result, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

The second research question addressed the amount of change that occurred in customer satisfaction based on the emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making demonstrated by the gig economy customers when rating independent providers:

RQ2: When combined in a single analysis, does the inclusion of emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethics account for significantly more incremental variance in customer satisfaction ratings than any of the predictors in isolation?

H_o2: There is no increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings.

H_a2: There is an increase in incremental variance accounted for in customer satisfaction ratings.

Hypothesis 2 stated that the emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making of customers significantly contributed to the change in customer satisfaction more than each of the predictors individually.

For the second research question standard multiple linear regression, $\alpha = .05$ (two-tailed), was used to examine the efficacy of emotional intelligence, ethical decision -making, distributive fairness, procedural fairness, interactional fairness in predicting

customer satisfaction. The independent variables were emotional intelligence, fairness orientation, and ethical decision-making orientation. The dependent variable was customer satisfaction. The null hypothesis was that there was no increase in incremental variance in customer satisfaction attributed to the ethical decision-making, fairness orientation, and emotional intelligence. Customer satisfaction was not significantly predicted by emotional intelligence. The alternative hypothesis was that customer satisfaction was significantly predicted by emotional intelligence. The model as a whole was not significant, $F(5, 13) = .92$, $p=.50$, $R^2 = .26$. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics. Table 2 depicts the regression summary.

To further analyze research question 2, a bias correcting bootstrapping method was used to address the violations of the multiple regression assumptions found in the analysis. For the bootstrapping analysis 2,000 samples were used to assess the dependent variable customer satisfaction and the independent variables which was ethical decision-making, fairness, and emotional intelligence at 95% confidence intervals using SPSS. Results are depicted in Table 4. The bootstrapped sample of 2,000 iterations was not statistically significant for independent variables. The results indicated that $p=.29$ for Ethical decision-making, $p=.41$ for interactional fairness, $p=.48$ for procedural fairness, $p=.16$ for distributive fairness, $p=$distributive fairness, $p=.22$ for emotional intelligence.

Table 1

Multiple Regression Analysis Summary of Customer Satisfaction

Variable	B	SEB	95% CI	T	P
(Constant)	3.57		[-.15,7.27]	2.07	.06
Ethical Decision-making	-.33	.28	[-.98, .32]	-1.1	.29
Interactional Fairness	-.31	-.39	[-1.10,.48]	-.84	.41
Procedural Fairness	-.26	-.37	[-1.03,.51]	-.73	.48
Distributive Fairness	.47	.81	[-.21,1.14]	1.48	.16
Emotional Intelligence	.24	.331	[-.16,.64]	1.3	.22

Note. R^2 Adjusted =.26, CI=Confidence Interval for B.

Table 2

Confidence Intervals of Bootstrapped Variables in RQ2

Variable	B	Bias	95% CI	St. Error	P
(Constant)	3.56	.22	[-1.39,8.51]	2.12	.16
Ethical Decision-making	-.33	-.03	[-.77, -.08]	.36	.26
Interactional Fairness	-.31	-.03	[-1.10,.48]	-.43	.37
Procedural Fairness	-.26	.60	[-1.08,1.17]	.50	.63
Distributive Fairness	.46	-.03	[-.05,.90]	.35	.18
Emotional Intelligence	.24	-.02	[-.13,.63]	.25	.38

Note. Significance 2 tailed 2000 bootstrapped samples

The third set of research questions examined how fairness impacted customer

satisfaction. The third set of research questions are as follows.

RQ3: When combined does distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice impact customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation?

H_o3: There is no combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation.

H_a3: There is a combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation.

The third research question assessed whether there was a combined effect on the three scales that comprise the fairness variable on customer satisfaction. This research question was tested by multiple regression analysis. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to examine customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. The fairness variable that was created from combining the means of distributive fairness, interactional fairness, and procedural fairness was the independent variable. Customer satisfaction was the independent variable that was entered in SPSS. The null hypothesis was that there was no combined effect on customer satisfaction and customer fairness orientation. Results showed that the model was not significant $F(5, 13) = .92$, $p=.50$, $R^2 = .26$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

A bias correcting bootstrapping analysis was performed to further analyze the third research question. Bootstrapping is a resampling method that can be used to when working with small sample sizes in a regression analysis when assumptions of multiple regression is violated and can be used on sample sizes that are less than 10 (Samart, Jansakul, & Chongcheawchamnan, 2018). The results of the analysis are depicted in Table 5. Bootstrapped samples lower than or equal to $p=.05$ are considered significant

(Karim, Reid, Tran, Cochrane, & Billah, 2017). The bootstrap sample of 2,000 iterations

was not significant for the fairness total independent variable *p=.45*.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis Summary of Customer Satisfaction and Fairness

Variable	B	SEB	95% C	t	p
(Constant)	3.13		[1.28, 4.98]	3.58	.45
Fairness Total	.13	.19	[-.23, .50]	.78	.45

Note. Significance 2 tailed 2000 bootstrapped samples

Table 5

Confidence Intervals of Bootstrapped Variables in RQ3

Variable	B	Bias	95% CI	St. Error	P
(Constant)	3.13	-.04	[.76, 4.88]	.83	.001
Fairness Total	.13	.01	[-.17, .55]	.19	.40

Note. Significance 2 tailed 2000 bootstrapped samples

Summary

The purpose of the study was to determine the type of relationship that exists

between customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness have with

customer satisfaction. This chapter specifically addressed the data analysis, hypotheses,

and research questions of the study. The correlations and regression results were

addressed in this chapter.

The effect that customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making and

fairness have on customer satisfaction were analyses in this research study. Results

showed that there were nonsignificant relationships between customer satisfaction and fairness. Additionally, the relationship between customer satisfaction and interactional fairness was nonsignificant. The relationship between customer satisfaction and distributive fairness was nonsignificant. Moreover, the relationship between ethical decision-making and customer satisfaction was nonsignificant. The null hypotheses for the research study were accepted.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how consumers evaluate independent gig economy providers during times when customers were dissatisfied with the services they received. I examined the relationship between customer satisfaction, ethical decision-making, emotional intelligence, and fairness for consumers who patronize businesses that operate a platform in the gig economy that are serviced by independent providers. I expected that participants who demonstrated a low amount of customer emotional intelligence and low amount of fairness would demonstrate less customer satisfaction. Participants with high emotional intelligence were expected to have higher scores in fairness and ethical decision-making. This study addressed a gap in the literature regarding the role that consumers have in providing performance evaluations for independent providers who operate businesses within the gig economy (see Bergman & Jean, 2016). More specifically, I explored how consumers evaluate independent providers during times when customers were dissatisfied with the services they received from independent providers in the gig economy.

The population sampled in the study consisted of adults who were at least 18 years of age residing in the United States who received services from an independent provider they were asked to rate. The instruments used in the study to obtain data from the participants included the Kidwell (2008) Consumer Emotional Intelligence Scale (CEIS), Customer Satisfaction Scale (Ba & Johansson, 2008), Muncy-Vitell (2005) Consumer Ethics Scale, and Joireman et al.'s (2013) Fairness Scale. Multiple regression

analysis was used to analyze the data that were collected from 19 participants who completed the measures.

In this chapter I address key findings that were identified and present interpretations of the findings of the study. Additionally, limitations of the study and implications of the research are addressed. Recommendations for future research are also noted in this chapter. The findings indicated that there was no significant effect between emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and fairness. The findings also indicated that there was a negative but nonsignificant correlation between ethical decision-making and customer satisfaction of customers in the gig economy who participated in the study. Additionally, results showed that there was a stronger but nonsignificant correlation between distributive fairness shown by participants followed by procedural and interactional fairness.

Interpretation of the Findings

Analysis of the data occurred to evaluate the relationship between customer satisfaction and ethical decision-making, emotional intelligence, and fairness orientation. The results showed there was no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, and ethical decision-making. None of the null hypotheses were rejected. The correlation between customer satisfaction, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making was in the expected direction, but the sample was too small to obtain significance. The results were not in the direction that was expected because the relationship between customer satisfaction and ethical decision-making was not significant. I expected that low scores in ethical decision-making would

be correlated with less customer satisfaction. The results also showed that there was no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and fairness. This finding was unexpected because I expected that customers who were fair would demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction. Although the results were in the right direction, a nonsignificant relationship was found between fairness and customer satisfaction.

The findings of this study contrasted with those from previous research that indicated that customer satisfaction and emotional intelligence had a strong correlation. At various stages of the sales process, emotional intelligence is used by sales professionals (Delpechitre & Beeler 2018). Although the current study focused on the customers' emotional intelligence, I expected that emotional intelligence would contribute significantly to the interaction. Findings on emotional abilities in customer interactions suggested that customer satisfaction is higher when customers have similar emotional abilities (Kidwell, Lopez-Kidwell, Blocker, & Mas, 2020). Additionally, bootstrapping the variables did not produce a significant relationship between ethical decision-making and customer satisfaction.

The sharing of information during ratings was expected to be higher in individuals who were not satisfied during a customer interaction where the participants were dissatisfied. Ethics research findings showed that sharing of information about other individuals is higher on social networking sites (Koohikamali, Peak, & Prybutok, 2017). Therefore, I expected that customers would be prone to share information when they were dissatisfied that they may not want to share about themselves in their work environment.

The findings for fairness were consistent with the research literature. Joireman et al. (2013) indicated that customers were not always likely to provide negative ratings based on a negative experience with an organization and were prone to demonstrate forgiveness. Retaliation shown by the participants in this study was not a byproduct of a negative experience with a provider. This was consistent with Joireman et al.'s findings regarding retaliation. Additionally, research findings showed that customers may not always respond in a receptive manner when organizations try to implement strategies that benefit customers and improve their relationships with their customers (Mathur & Sarin Jain, 2020).

Limitations of the Study

Lack of participation was the major limitation of the study. The ability to recruit participants was limited due to multiple natural disasters that impacted the region where I resided during the data collection process. Therefore, the ability to collect data from participants was limited to online data collection due to evacuation procedures and time the local region needed to recover from storms. Another factor that limited participation was prospective participants had to address storm-related issues among friends, family, and other individuals within their sphere of influence. Additionally, data were collected based on one experience the participant had with an independent business owner. The study did not address whether participants had a favorable experience with another independent provider from a platform business or the same business after the event in question occurred.

The study involved a smaller sample than was desired to respond to the research questions. A small sample size does not provide sufficient data to support generalizability of the study results across various demographic groups within the age range in different regions of the United States (Wanberg, Kanfer, Hamann, & Zhang, 2016). Although some of the factors that prevent validation and reliability of the study were attributed to the small sample size, concerns that were identified by Abuela and Hartwell (2020) regarding doing sufficient model checking and elimination of incomplete participant results did occur in the data analysis of the study.

Incomplete surveys were an additional limitation of the study. Although some participants began the study, they dropped out based on their lack of motivation to complete the study. Some participants dropped out after completing most of the survey, which was a hinderance in determining the validity of the data. Additionally, data from the participants who did not complete the study were not included in the final analysis based on the study design and approved data analysis plan. Participants in online studies have a higher dropout rate than paper-based studies because participants stop participating when they no longer feel that the study pertains to them (Hochheimer, Sabo, Perera, Mukhopadhyay, & Krist, 2019).

Psychological factors that may contribute to customer ratings were a limitation of the study. There are factors such as jealousy or envy that customers had regarding the independent providers success in business that may contribute to fairness that is demonstrated by customers which may have motivated ratings that were provided by customers when they rated independent providers. I did not examine whether there were

relational factors that may have contributed to the satisfaction that customers received, such as a relationship with the independent provider. Customers may have had a relationship with the independent provider that contributed to the ratings they provided. Additionally, a customer's willingness to forgive was not examined when there were issues when a negative interaction may have occurred. However, the emotional intelligence scores may have reflected the capacity that customers have to examine situations from the perspective of others.

The instruments chosen for the study may have been a limitation. The emotional intelligence scale used in the study was the CEIS, which may have limited the results. Reliability of the CEIS was low with a value of .10 but seemed to contribute to the results in a meaningful way. Even though nonsignificant results were found in the study, the significance between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction was greater than any other variable where ($p = .19$). Ethical decision-making was assessed for the customers and the negative correlation that was discovered may have been a result of the limitation of the instruments. The ethical decision-making scale consisted of 13 items, and nine items had reliability that was less than .70. Despite the low interitem reliability, the scale had high reliability of .80.

The type of gig economy may have limited the results. Although the sample consisted of individuals who purchased products or services from an independent provider, the study did not target a specific type of gig economy business model. This may have limited the focus of the research. I did not take into consideration the amount of interaction that a customer had with an independent provider during the sales process,

as the emotional intelligence necessary used during interactions may differ when there is less interaction in a sales transaction (Delpechitre & Beeler, 2018).

Future researchers may explore the satisfaction of customers in specific areas of the gig economy. I did not target any area of the gig economy for participants to shed light on ratings received by people who work as independent contractors. Organizations in different areas of the gig economy that use independent providers can assess the customer satisfaction and explore the impact of emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making to identify how these variables impact the ratings that independent providers receive. Platforms in industries such as writing sites, consulting sites, and other types of service provider sites can conduct research to provide insight on their specific customers. Performing the research based on certain regions within industries may shed light on the expectations of the customers within certain markets in an industry. The current study did not address demographic factors such as whether consumers were existing entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, or individuals who had recently closed a business. Additionally, this study did not address the income level of participants to determine the expectations of customers at different stages of economic success. Examining these factors may help organizations of all types gain better awareness of how to serve customers who have different level of expectations based on the type of services they provide to customers at various price points within their businesses.

After completion of this study, it became evident that there may be additional factors that may exist when service delivery failures occur, which contributed to the

additional research that Joireman et al. (2013) suggested was necessary to explore the possible impact of brand loyalty if customers have not decided to cut their ties with a platform based on additional factors such as limited availability of other alternative services or other meaningful interactions with other service providers of a brand. Personality clashes that may occur during one bad interaction with an independent provider may contribute to the mercy that is extended and may be a reason for forgiveness extended to independent service providers. Additionally, the role of the independent provider's emotional intelligence may contribute to the emotional regulation that is demonstrated by their customers, which may contribute to the lack of retaliation that is demonstrated by customers.

Recommendations

The study added to the body of knowledge on the gig economy. Individuals who work on platforms are typically not covered by labor law standards because they are regarded as self-employed in most countries around the world (Fredman et al., 2020). Founders of platform-based businesses can utilize the findings of this research to make decisions regarding relationships between customers and independent providers. Leaders of platform-based businesses can explore the nonsignificant findings of the study and expand on the research. nonsignificant findings are typically left out of published research due to bias in literature, and there is difficulty determining conclusions in quantitative studies (Lakens & Etz, 2017).

Future research on the gig economy can examine the relationship a customer has after they had a negative customer experience followed by a separate pleasant encounter

to determine what was involved in the pleasant one. This type of additional research may examine if the customer's emotional intelligence was elevated during the recent interaction of if the skills demonstrated by the independent provider were more advanced which improved the level of customer satisfaction. Prior research on the gig economy identified that gig economy workers use platform businesses as a tool to supplement income from current jobs, businesses, or generate leads for other entrepreneurial endeavors (Bates, Zwick, Spicer, Kerzhner, Kim, Baber, Green, & Moulden, 2019). Examining the relationships that independent providers have with customers can benefit the gig economy. It may be important for leaders of platform-based businesses to examine the relationships that customers have with their clients to provide opportunities for independent providers to earn additional income to fill income gaps that they have due to low wage employment earned from their primary occupations or serve as their sole source of income (Bates et al, 2019).

Researchers can replicate this study with a statistically valid sample for each of the research variables and determine the validity and reliability of the study. Further research can determine if some of the concerns with the present study were attributed to the study being performed by a novice human studies researcher in the field of industrial psychology (Abulela & Harwell, 2020). It is my belief that additional research on the variables used in this study would serve the purpose of confirming or disconfirming the research results.

Theoretical Contributions

This study attempted to examine Segon and Booth's (2015) belief that emotional intelligence should contain ethical components. The lack of significant results for ethical decision-making, customer emotional intelligence, and fairness confirm that customers may utilize a common good ethical theoretical approach during their interactions with independent providers because there was no strong correlation between fairness and ethical decision-making. This provides evidence of ethical considerations addressed in the research study of customers fostering good in communities (McPherson, 2013), and consideration for the choices that customers make in their evaluations (Brown University, 2017).

The common good theoretical approach may provide evidence of underlying factors that result in the type of customer behaviors that were indicated in the research findings. In terms of customer satisfaction, the key components of loyalty include the customer behavior and attitudes which are demonstrated by their loyalty to the brand (Lu, Ren, Zhang, Wang, Shahid, & Streimikis, 2020).

Implications

This study is one of few studies that have explored the customer emotional intelligence during business interactions. Moreover, the study is one of few that explore customer emotional intelligence in platform-based businesses. This research may be used to examine customer emotional intelligence in various industries within the economy who use a platform-based business**.**

Customer satisfaction is necessary for businesses to remain open in society. Customer that are satisfied with the services they received from organizations can help business owners and independent providers earn a livelihood in society. There is a greater need for customer satisfaction in the United States as individuals now have various means of communicating their satisfaction with organizations to their peers both privately and on various social networking sites and public forums. The increased need for customer satisfaction in society has caused businesses to look to find ways to increase customer satisfaction.

Theoretical Implications

Ethically, it is implied from the findings that customers use a common good ethical approach when they receive services from independent providers. The negative correlation between ethical decision-making and fairness provided evidence that a change in customer satisfaction did not make a significant contribution to customers behaving in a less ethical manner.

Emotional intelligence is an area that has been widely researched in organizations and in society. The need for emotional intelligence has gained considerable attention in society as individuals explore how emotional intelligence impacts their interactions with other individuals. Emotional intelligence help individuals have better relationships with others as they learn how they perceive others and how they perceive themselves. A review of the correlations between the variables in this study implied that a change in customer satisfaction by 1standard deviation would show an increase in customer emotional intelligence.

Individuals expect to receive fairness from organizations when they are customers and work in businesses. The need for fair treatment is something that is widely recognized in society as individuals explore and demonstrate their dissatisfaction when unfair treatment occurs during social and business interactions.

Social Change

The positive social change of the research is that the study can assist organizations and independent providers within the gig economy who service platform-based businesses with awareness of customer satisfaction and the customer emotional intelligence which is demonstrated during the entire customer experience with the independent provider.

This study can provide insight to corporations that service customers who purchase products and services from the independent providers who service the gig economy. By adapting to study to various forms of gig economy organizations, businesses can obtain insight by conducting further study to determine the magnitude of the relationship between customer emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, fairness and how they impact the consumer satisfaction in various forms of businesses that make up the gig economy.

This study and additional research on customer emotional intelligence, fairness, ethical decision-making in the United States can provide insight that can impact social change in the gig economy. Insight can be provided to executives who are responsible for leading corporations that utilize a gig economy business model on customer satisfaction and emotional intelligence. Additional studies on customer emotional intelligence and

ethical decision-making, and fairness can be performed to add to the body of knowledge on possible influences that occur during the interactions after service failure occurs in the gig economy.

Additional research on the role of emotional intelligence and the role of emotional regulation and job satisfaction of independent providers may add to the body of knowledge to impact social change in the gig economy. Evaluation of the emotions of others during customer service interactions was most accurate when workers controlled their own emotions (Pekaar, van der Linden, Bakker, & Born, 2017).

Future Research

Researchers can examine whether emotional intelligence customer satisfaction and ethical decision- making, and fairness contribute to customer satisfaction in the gig economy. Future research could examine the role of ethical decision making in the consumers who purchase products and services from independent providers in the gig economy and consumer satisfaction and emotional intelligence in those consumers. While the results were insignificant for the research study there was a strong relationship between the role of emotional intelligence and ethical decision making and consumers of the gig economy. By conducting a study with a larger sample size, researchers can determine whether there is a significant impact or determine the magnitude of the role of ethical decision-making and emotional intelligence and consumer satisfaction in the gig economy.

Companies that provide services and products to consumers in the gig economy using independent providers on a platform-based business can benefit from the research

study by exploring specific areas of the gig economy and the role of customer emotional intelligence in those types of gig economy corporations. Future research can explore how consumers evaluate independent providers during times when dissatisfaction may occur in a transaction between a consumer and an independent provider. The motivational factors for low or high ratings that are provided by the customers is an area that can be further explored and future research can determine what factors cause customers to provide low performance ratings they give in order to determine the behaviors of consumers and the motivational factors behind consumer ratings.

By exploring consumer ethical decision-making and consumer emotional intelligence researchers can determine whether there is a substantial or a significant effect then the ratings based on the ethical decision-making and emotional intelligence consumers. This insight may provide valuable information to companies when they make decisions about contract renewals for independent providers based on retaliation or lack of retaliation demonstrated by customers and other factors that may result in termination of independent provider service contracts.

Conclusion

Customer satisfaction is an area that is widely researched in organizations of all types. This research study attempted to add to the body of knowledge on customer satisfaction in the gig economy by exploring the fairness, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making of customers. This study showed aspects of fairness which customers may use when they rate independent providers in the gig economy. This study explored the use of social justice theory within the context of the gig economy. Insight

was provided regarding the fairness that customers use when they rate independent providers and the influence of emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on gig economy relationships between providers and their customers.

This research provides organizations that utilize independent providers with opportunities to further explore the relationships between the independent providers and their customers. Aspects of customer relationship with independent providers that were examined in this study included customer satisfaction, emotional intelligence, fairness, and ethical decision-making used when evaluating independent providers. While no significant relationships were found between the research variables the study provides insight that can contribute to future research which can lead to improvement in the relationships independent providers have with their customers. Additional research can provide organizations with an awareness of customer satisfaction with independent providers. Further research on customer satisfaction in the gig economy can impact social change as research can help organizations explore the relationships that customers have with independent providers by evaluating ethical decision-making, fairness, and customer emotional intelligence. Additional research can examine justice theory and help improve the relationships that customers have with independent providers and improve the common good that is experienced by providers and their customers on a local, state, and national level.

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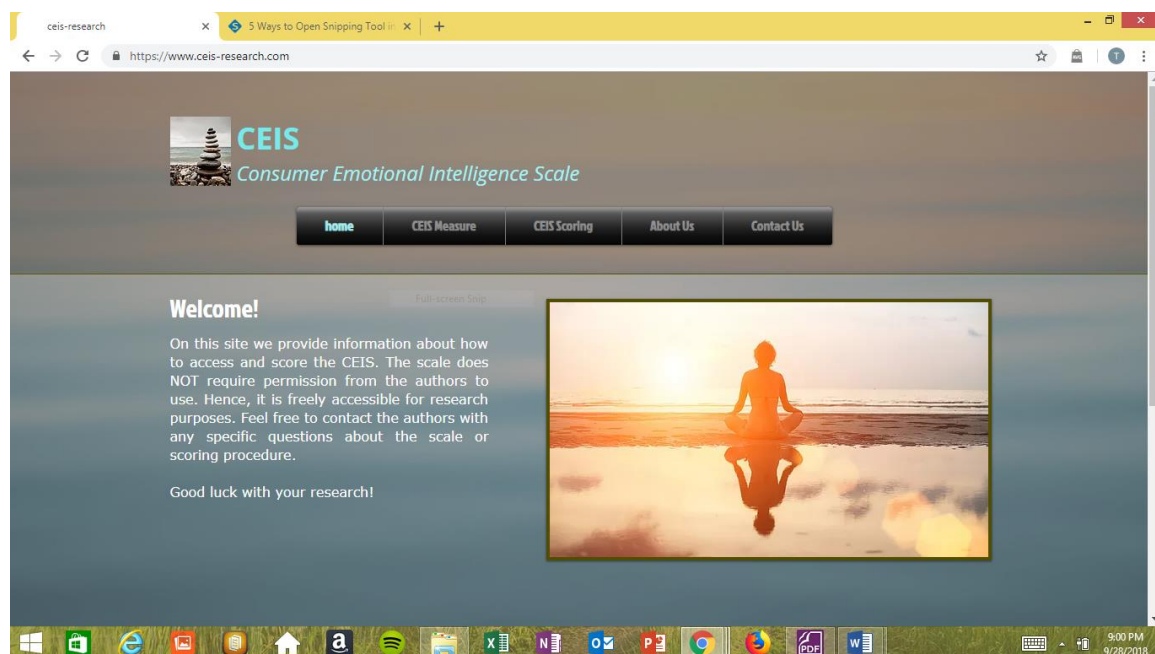
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Appendix A: Customer Emotional Intelligence Scale Permission

Appendix B: Customer Satisfaction Scale Permission

Letter from Dr. XX. /XXX@uconn.edu

Received August 7, 2018 2:13 PM

Hi Tameka,

Yes, you have permission. There is no manual or costs associated with using my

instrument.

Best,

Dr. XX

Professor University of Connecticut

To: Dr. XX. @uconn.edu

From: Tameka Austin XX@waldenu.edu

Sent: August 7, 2018

Subject: Instrument Permission Request

Dear Dr. XX.

I am a Doctoral Candidate at Walden University. I will begin data collection for my study

soon. My research entails evaluations from customers. I would like to obtain permission

to use your instrument (identified in the reference below) to obtain data from research

participants on customer satisfaction. Please provide email permission so that I have this

documentation for my records. Additionally, let me know if there is a manual required for

use of the instrument and the costs associated with using the material.

Regards,

Tameka Austin

Industrial/Organizational Psychology PhD Candidate

Reference

Ba, S., & Johansson, W. C. (2008). An exploratory study of the impact of e-service

process on online customer satisfaction. *Production & Operations Management*,

17(1), 107-119. doi:10.3401/poms.1070.0006

Appendix C: Consumer Ethics Scale Permission

From: Tameka Austin XX@waldenu.edu

Sent;: September 28, 2018 , 4:02 AM

To: XX@Springnature.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to obtain approval to use the Consumer Ethics Scale. The scale was mentioned in the article written by Muncy and Vitell (2005) which I have identified below. I am a PhD Candidate in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at Walden University. I would like to use this scale for my doctoral research on consumer emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making. My research entails obtaining ethics data from research participants based upon their interactions with business owners. I sent emails to the email addresses provided in the journal article for both authors. I have not received email approval from the authors. Please provide written approval for me to use the Consumer Ethics Scale to complete my dissertation. Additionally, please advise if there is a manual required for scoring and any fees necessary for use.

I spoke with a representative from Springer Nature and was provided this email address to obtain permission to use this instrument. I have received permission to use all of the other instruments from authors and need permission to use the scale in the article that you published to complete my dissertation. As I indicated to your staff, I obtained the article from my school library.

Regards,

Tameka Austin

PhD Candidate Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program

Reference

Vitell, S., & Muncy, J. (2005). The Muncy-Vitell Consumer Ethics Scale: A modification and application. Journal of Business Ethics, 62(3), 267-275. doi:10.1007/s10551-005-7058-9

Appendix D: Fairness Scale Permission

From: Tameka Austin [XX@waldenu.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, August 7, 2018 10:10 AM

To: Dr. XX <XX@wsu.edu>

Subject: Instrument Permission Request

 Dear Dr. XX,

I am a Doctoral Candidate at Walden University. I will begin data collection for my study soon. My research entails evaluations from customers. I would like to obtain permission to use your instrument (identified in the article below) to obtain data from research participants on fairness. Please provide email permission so that I have this documentation for my records. Additionally, let me know if there is a manual required for use of the instrument and the costs associated with using the material.

 Regards,

Tameka Austin

Industrial/Organizational Psychology PhD Candidate

Reference

Joireman, J., Grégoire, Y., Devezer, B., & Tripp, T. M. (2013). When do customers offer firms a'second chance' following a double deviation? The impact of inferred firm motives on customer revenge and reconciliation. Journal of Retailing, 89(3), 315-337. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2013.03.002

From: Dr. XX <XX@wsu.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, August 7, 2018 1:20:52 PM

To: Tameka Austin

Subject: RE: Instrument Permission Request

 Hi Tameka,

Thanks for reaching out. I believe all of the scales can be found in the appendix of the

article. You are certainly free to use them. Good luck.

 Best,

 XX,

Washington State University

Appendix E: Twitter Post

Had a less than perfect provider experience with a contractor from a platform business that serviced you (Examples: Lyft driver, Airbnb host in a private home)? If you rated this type of provider, then please respond to this survey

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2W75TX2

Appendix F: Social Media Post for Facebook and LinkedIn

Have you ever had a less than positive experience with an independent contractor from a platform business that provided a service to you (Examples: a Lyft driver, Airbnb host (in private home) or Postmates driver ? If you have ever provided a rating for this type of service provider, then I need your help. If you are an adult living in the United States and you have rated an independent contractor, please respond to the following survey: Fairness, Emotional Intelligence, and Ethical Decision-making in Customer Evaluations of Providers". This research study is being conducted in order to complete a doctorate degree.