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Research Paper

From Service Failure Typologies to Configurational Recovery and Outcomes in Logistics Delivery Networks.

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ABSTRACT

Service failure and recovery research generally follows a linear and firm-centric perspectives and consider failures and resulted outcomes as isolated phenomena. Besides, service failure and recovery have been widely studied in industries like tourism and hospitality. Limited research focused on logistics, particularly in B2B contexts, involving complex operations with multiple actors during delivery process, which increases the likelihood of failures. This study deviate from existing views by proposing a configurational understanding of service failure and recovery in logistics delivery networks. Drawing upon qualitative data collected through Critical Incident Technique (CIT), the study analyses 69 cases of service failures and recoveries. The findings identify diverse service failure typologies and demonstrate that heterogeneous failures are likely to produce multiple, simultaneously occurring behavioural outcomes. Similarly, we reveal that heterogeneous failures tend to require multiple, simultaneously occurring recovery actions that are aligned with specific failure characteristics. For instance, results emphasize that operational failures are mostly resolved with procedural and interactional justice. Furthermore, the findings disclose that outcome configurations propagate across actors within logistics delivery networks, affecting inter-organizational relationships. By revealing service failure typologies, and outcome and recovery configurations, this study contributes to the existing literature by proposing a multi-level and configurational perspective on failure and recovery within logistics delivery networks.

Keywords: service failure, service recovery, logistics delivery network, critical incident technique, configurational perspective

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1. INTRODUCTION

Service marketing began to take its place in the marketing discipline, especially in the late 1970s, with discussions on product and service differences (Brown et al., 1994). It has been accepted that services differ from products due to their characteristic features such as intangibility, variability, inseparability and perishability, and therefore different applications are needed when marketing products and services (Kozak et al., 2011). For instance, the intangibility of services is likely to cause anxiety in customers before purchasing a service, as the services cannot be held in the hand, cannot be perceived with the five senses, and therefore cannot be easily defined, making it difficult to perceive mentally (Öztürk, 2011). In addition, due to these features, the customer becomes a part of the production process, which makes it possible to create value together, while making it difficult to hide even a small error from the customer (Yıldırım et al., 2019). Due to these features, Fisk et al. (1993) claim that it is impossible to provide 100% error-free service and emphasize both the importance of service error, and the compensation of these errors, especially in the field of service marketing.

Service failures (SF) are any real and/or perceived problems with a service during the consumer's experience (Maxham III, 2001). In short, SF is the failure of the service to meet customer expectations (Bitner et al., 1990; Hoffman and Bateson, 1997). Past studies have classified service failures as service unavailability, unreasonably slow service, and basic service failures (Bitner et al., 1994). Similarly, many past studies have generally emphasized two main types of SFs as process failures, referring to the disruption experienced in receiving the service in question and outcome failures, including situations where customers do not receive the service they paid for (Bitner et al., 1990; Hoffman et al., 1995; Smith and Bolton, 2002; Smith et al., 1999).

After experiencing failures, consumers demonstrate behavioural outcomes such as customer dissatisfaction (Kelley et al., 1994), emotional reactions (e.g. anger, disappointment, etc., Seiders and Berry, 1998), negative word of mouth (Mattila, 2001), customer switching (Keaveney, 1995; Nikbin et al., 2013), decreased employee morale and performance (Bitner et al., 1994). Due to this, customers change the companies they receive service from, and therefore, the companies that make

the failure may lose their existing customers and potential customers due to negative comments (Nikbin et al., 2012). Therefore, when companies make a failure, they should compensate for these mistakes to make the dissatisfied customer satisfied again (Sparks and McColl-Kennedy, 2001). Although it doesn't seem possible to eliminate the failure in the service sector in general, it is observed that customer satisfaction and customer loyalty increase with the successful recovery of the failure (Min et al., 2013). In short, managing the compensation of SF in business management plays an important role in the process of realizing customer value (Grönroos, 2011). This subject is studied within the umbrella of Justice Theory, which also constitutes the theoretical framework of this study and further will be discussed.

Service failures are studied in various industries, especially in consumer markets (e.g. tourism, hospitality, catering, etc.), focusing on individual customer as a unit of analysis (Gijzenberg et al., 2015) and thus giving limited interest in the effect of failure on broader networks. Recently, although the service failure and recovery across the complexities of multi-actor context is recognized (i.e. Weber and Hsu, 2021), it is seen that the number of studies on service failure and recovery in B2B markets, and especially in the logistics sector is low (Gidener-Özaydın, 2015). Despite having similarities, B2B markets show differences from B2C markets (Coviello and Brodie, 2001). For instance, due to having interconnected actors/partners in traditional industries that aim to create value for consumers together (Bai et al., 2025), B2B service process is more complicated (Brown et al., 2006), and relational (Coviello and Brodie, 2001), which makes sustaining the relationship after a failure more essential.

From logistics sector perspective, for example, while ensuring that a product reaches the end consumer, LSPs try to monitor and manage multiple operations with multiple actors (Ünal et al., 2022), including suppliers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers, as well as LSPs (cargo companies, freight forwarders, third-party logistics providers) that physically progress this flow. This increases the probability of failures in logistics operations (Günaydın and Işık, 2017). Moreover, this makes LSPs important actors in supply chain management and/or service delivery networks, in which two or more actors work collectively for providing a connected, holistic service experience (Tax et al., 2013), as they affect both B2B and B2C consumers' perceptions (Oflač et al., 2012). Any failure in logistics process will create dissatisfaction for the industrial consumer, who may terminate his/her relationship with the company, leading to an increase in potential stress in the workplace (Leach and Liu, 2014), a decrease in the company's future revenues and market

value (Gijzenberg et al., 2015), and even penalties due to non-compliance provisions (Ferguson and Johnston, 2011). Unfortunately, failure within a multi-actor context like logistics processes can also negatively affect other actors/partners in the chain/network (Yildirim et al., 2018). Similarly, Baliga et al. (2021) infer that besides decreasing efficiency, and brand image, failure leads to a domino effect in B2B supply chains. Moreover, as suggested by Zhu and Zolkiewski (2015), recovery efforts should match with SF type for improving customer recovery perception and avoid negative impacts created by domino effect and dissatisfaction.

Following the argument above, it is possible to say that this study also connects the existing SF literature with product-harm crisis (PHC) lenses. Product-harm crisis is explained as “*a discrete event wherein physical products are found to be defective and dangerous to at least part of the customer base*” (Cleeren et al., 2017, p. 612). As the definition applies, the difference between PHC and SF literature is the typical number of affected customers and the nature of offering (Khamitov et al., 2020). PHC literature shows that following a product-harm crisis, the resulting marketing responses include decreased sales/market share (Rubel et al. 2011), reduced marketing effectiveness, increased brand vulnerability (van Heerde et al. 2007), and consumers becoming more sensitive to price (Cleeren et al. 2013). In addition, as negative information is more informative and persistent, failure could decrease perceived service quality (Gijzenberg et al., 2015), and customer trust (van Heerde et al., 2005). Due to these negative effects and crisis/failure’s impact on short- and long-term effectiveness (van Heerde et al., 2005), this research stream emphasizes (1) managers’ need to optimally adjust their actions in real time in case of a crisis, (2) the need to broaden our knowledge beyond the generally studied industries (Cleeren et al., 2017), and (3) the effects of place/distribution on performance (Ataman et al., 2010). Additionally, existing models in PHC literature, by pooling different failure types into a single homogeneous construct, limit the ability to capture heterogeneity, within contexts where the negative events are diverse, like service failures. Building on these, as place of marketing mix includes the operations of LSPs, we aim to reveal a typology of service failures experienced by LSPs, their results in terms of behavioural outcomes, and the required recovery methods applied. In doing so, this study positions service failures in logistics context not just as isolated incidents that influence individual evaluations, but as a network-level disruption that affects interconnected actors through several behavioural outcomes such as dissatisfaction, and domino effect.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As service failure and recovery are usually studied within the umbrella of Justice Theory, it is selected as a conceptual framework for this study. Justice Theory is a theoretical framework to comprehend consumers' perceptions of service recovery effectiveness through concentrating on the perceived fairness of the recovery process (Smith et al., 1999). Perceived fairness in Justice Theory includes three dimensions: (1) Distributive Justice (perceived fairness of outcomes, meaning resource allocation (Blodgett et al., 1993), (2) Procedural Justice (perceived fairness of processes), (3) Interactional Justice (perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment) (Bai et al., 2025; Bies and Shapiro, 1987).

Distributive Justice (DJ) recovers the balance of the output and input (or cost/benefit ratios) in business relations (Vidal et al., 2016) by providing material recoveries such as compensation, replacements, refunds, discounts, free gifts, etc. (i.e. Karatepe, 2006; Kim et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2011). These compensations may help a grieving consumer to mitigate his/her perception of loss as s/he receives a concrete output during recovery efforts (Roy et al., 2022), which means the equity logic is sustained (Oflač et al., 2021). Accordingly, it is found that allocating rewards, benefits, or resources (Siu et al., 2013) in an, for instance, interorganizational relationship (Normann et al., 2017), creates a positive impact on both behavioural and attitudinal outcomes (Hofer et al., 2012).

Procedural justice (PJ) indicates the customer's perceived justice regarding the procedures, processes, policies and methods used for failure resolution (Cao et al., 2008; Mattila, 2001). This means, if the failure is solved with a timely and flexible manner, customers perceive the process as fair and adequate (Oflač et al., 2021). Besides being timely and flexible, accessibility, process control, and delays are facets that are used for the assessment of PJ (Rio-Lanza et al., 2009). As is seen, PJ includes tools to maintain and support communication with customers (Davidow, 2003) and thus focuses on the way in which the outcome is attained (Nikbin et al., 2010). Similar to DJ, PJ also improves long-term B2B relationships (Hofer et al., 2012).

Perceived fairness of the company's and/or employees' manners during the transaction is referred to as interactional justice (IJ) (Blodgett et al., 1993). It basically refers to communication between the provider and customer after service failure occurs (McColl-Kennedy and Sparks, 2003). Thus, positive interpersonal emotions such as apologies, empathy, and courtesy are considered key factors while executing IJ (Clopton et al., 2001). Kim, et al. (2009) conceptualize these factors as

courtesy, respect, interest, trust, empathy, effort, apology, careful listening, explanation, and communication. Thus, it can be inferred that IJ is the social side of relationships in B2B context (Normann et al., 2017) and thus may have an influence on the relationship commitments of partners (Yang et al., 2008). Further, this commitment may, in turn, positively affect the level of trust between partners (Liu et al., 2021), and thus the future of buyer-seller relationships (Marcos, 2018).

Justice Theory helps us understand the value creation in collaborative relationships for inter-organizational members (Wagner et al., 2010). This means when multiple actors/partners perceive a higher level of justice, it leads to improved collaborative behaviours and continuity of the relationship (Huang et al., 2024; Palmatier et al., 2006; Wu and Chiu, 2018). Therefore, it is important for LSPs, who want to develop long-term relationships with their customers and reduce these potential losses, to understand the reasons behind this dissatisfaction for B2B relationships (Pascual-Nebreda et al., 2023).

Although the previous literature on Justice Theory primarily focuses on individual-level evaluation, the context of the study, as the discussion above shows, extends this perspective towards a multi-actor setting. In doing so, we conceptualize failures as network-level disruptions, producing several behavioural outcomes, and triggering fairness evaluations across partners in logistics delivery networks. With this approach, we aim to develop a more comprehensive understanding of effects of different failures, and their influence on interconnected partners in the delivery network.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to reveal the typology of service failures experienced by LSPs and the recovery methods applied. To achieve this purpose, this study uses the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). CIT is a useful method frequently used in studies on service failures and recovery (Bitner et al., 1990; Bitner et al., 1994). The reason why CIT was chosen as a suitable method for this study is that in addition to having examples in the field, people's narrations about the events provide accurate and consistent interpretations (Viney, 1983) as they provide their lived experiences through retrospective storytelling. This supports the recommendation of Khamitov et al. (2020), emphasizing the need for capturing real behaviours. In addition, as a qualitative and exploratory method, CIT is “opening the blackbox” (Doz, 2011) and increases the knowledge in

this field by uncovering contextual richness, meaning that it examines how different event (e.g. failure) types produce diverse configurations of consequences. Unlike most empirical models relying on pooling assumptions that treat marketing outcomes as homogeneous across contexts, CIT helps to increase structural heterogeneity by concentrating on detailed failure incidents through collecting direct observations of human behaviour that facilitate potential utility in solving practical problems (Flanagan, 1954).

According to Flanagan (1954), an event is any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the action, and for the event to be critical it must occur in a situation where the purpose or intention of the action seems clear to the observer and the consequences are so certain that there is no doubt about their effects. Within the marketing discipline, Bitner et al. (1990) define critical incidents as specific interactions between customers and service employees that are satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Similar to content analysis, CIT takes stories that people tell and aims to construct a classification by asking questions to derive schema from the stories (Bitner et al., 1990). In this context, the critical incident for the study should include the following characteristics:

- (1) A customer-employee interaction,
- (2) A dissatisfied customer,
- (3) A critical error that is so memorable to the employee,
- (4) An incident that is as detailed as the researcher can imagine.

The study uses a survey form that is in line with the purpose and method stated above. The survey form was adapted from a similar study written on this subject before (Gidener-Özaydın, 2015) asking open-ended questions for respondents to narrate their real-life experiences of SF and recovery, and demographic questions as we also want to see some descriptive statistics of respondents such as company size, logistics process in which the failure happened, and delivery methods. Flanagan (1984) states that the number of critical incidents collected should be between 50-100 to collect meaningful results from critical incidents. Gremler (2004) states that 100 incidents should be collected to obtain more reliable results. Therefore, firstly, this study aims to collect 100 critical incidents.

The sampling of the study was purposive and snowball, survey forms were sent to the e-mail addresses that were obtained from an industry association. Then references from the respondents are asked to increase the response rate. In the first round, the return rate was low, so after two

weeks, remainder e-mails were sent. After the remainder e-mails, the responses increased to 50. Further effort was made to increase the response rate; this time we achieved 70 responses. Due to the difficulties experienced in the data collection process and as we saw that the data was saturated (the data collection and analysis stages are done simultaneously), we decided to stop data collection process. One of the responses was not added to the final data sheet due to missing data, and as a result, the study had 69 critical incidents for both failures and recoveries experienced by LSPs.

Data analysis carried out through MaxQDA Analytics Pro (24.7.0). To carry out the analysis, the suggestions of Strauss and Corbin (1990) including open, axial and selective coding methods were used. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, researchers used the triangulation method. To avoid data manipulation and to increase trustworthiness of the study, we used data triangulation throughout the study, moving between existing literature and the findings of the study. Furthermore, with triangulation between researchers, we reached diverse perspectives and explanations of the findings, which aid us to enhance the validity (Maylor and Blackmon, 2005). Due to multiple researchers, we could control potential biases of any one individual researcher may have.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the paper has been divided into two main sections. The first part gives information about the respondents including descriptive statistics. The second part further details the qualitative findings of the study.

4.1. Descriptive statistics

The results of the study were obtained using MaxQDA 24 Analytics Pro (24.7.0). First, the demographic questions were analysed, then MaxQDA 24 Analytics Pro (24.7.0) was further used for the Critical Incident Review. In this section, first the descriptive statistics of the study will be presented, then the results of the Critical Incident Review will be shared. A total of 69 responses were collected, and the demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (%)*
Male	57,97
Female	37,68
Age	Frequency (%)
20-24	47,83
25-29	21,74
30-34	10,14
35-39	8,70
40-44	4,35
45-49	1,45
50 and above	5,80
Education	Frequency (%)
High School	2,90
University	91,30
Masters Degree	5,80

*The reason why frequency distributions do not add up to 100% is due to missing answers.

As seen in Table 1, 57.97% of the respondents are male, 37.68% are female and 4.35% did not specify their gender. As expected, logistics sector is a male-dominant sector. As Türkiye has a young population and thus a large available workforce (Erlandsson and Pihl, 2023), the age distribution demonstrates the largest group as the 20-24 age group with 47.83%, followed by the 25-29 (21.74%) and 30-34 age group (10.14%). The young population of logistics sector is also an expected result as the average age of Türkiye is 34,9 in 2025 (Oruç, 2026). Moreover, the reason for this high young employee profile is that there is high employment capacity for the Turkish Logistics Sector (Kuşat, 2024). When looking at the education level, it is seen that most of the respondents are university graduates, it is noteworthy that the sector's education level is high.

Table 2. Profile of Companies Respondents Work

Company Type*	Frequency (%)
3PL	13,04
Agency	8,70
Broker	1,45
Freight Forwarder	49,28
Liner	8,70
Small Package Carrier	10,14
Logistics	4,35
Cargo Tracking Services	1,45

Company Age	Frequency (%)
1-5	24,64
6-10	14,49
11-20	23,19
21-30	17,39
30 and above	20,29

*The reason why frequency distributions do not add up to 100% is due to missing answers.

The largest portion of the respondents work in Freight Forwarder companies with 49.28%. This is followed by third party logistics companies (3PL) with 13.04% and small package carriers with 10.14%. When the distribution of employees by title is examined, the largest share belongs to Experts with 24.64%, Managers with 18.84% and Interns with 17.39%. Operations Staff is 11.59% and Sales Staff is 7.25%. The largest share of the distribution of respondents by department belongs to the Operations department with 37.68%. This is followed by Logistics with 10.14% and Sales and Import-Export with 8.7%. It is observed that most businesses in the sector are young (24.64%), and companies operating for 11-20 years (23.19%) and more than 30 years (20.29%) also have a remarkable rate.

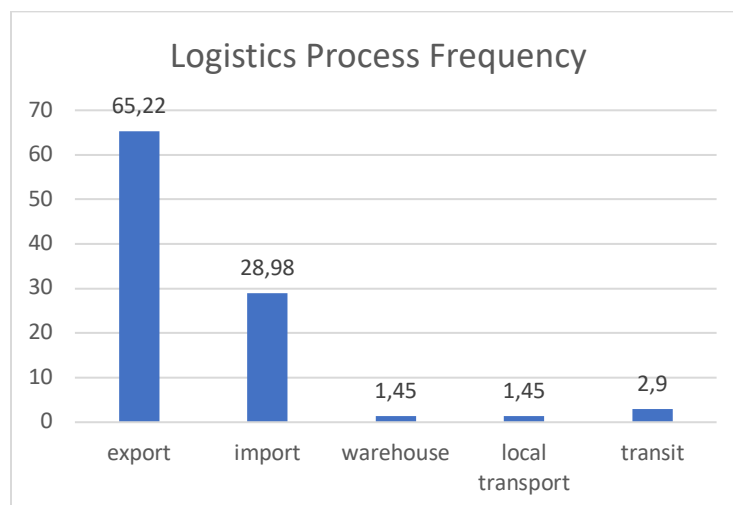


Figure 1. Logistics Process Frequency

The respondents were first asked in which process they experienced the failures. Most of the respondents stated that they experienced critical events during the export process (65.22%, See Figure 1), followed by imports. This result is also not surprising. According to 2025 data, export and import rates in Türkiye have increased by 3,4% and 2,2%, respectively, compared to last year's

data (TUIK Data Portal, 2025). Furthermore, Türkiye's service exports exceeded 117 billion \$ in 2024, and logistics and transportation generated 34,6 % of this amount, showing that logistics sector is playing a fundamental role (UTIKAD, 2024, p.45-46). Then, the respondents were asked in which delivery method the critical event occurred. The most common answer to this question was Cost Insurance Freight (CIF) with 46.38%, followed by Free on Board (FOB) with 28.99% (See Table 4).

Table 4. Delivery Method

Delivery Method	Frequency (%)*
Cost Insurance Freight (CIF)	46,38
Free on Board (FOB)	28,99
Delivered At Place (DAP)	8,70
Delivered Duty Paid (DDP)	2,90
Exworks (EXW)	2,90
Proforma	1,45

* The reason why frequency distributions do not add up to 100% is due to missing answers.

4.2. Service Failure and Recovery Classification of LSPs

The second part of the study's findings consists of the results of the Critical Incident Technique. An analysis was conducted to classify the service failures experienced by LSPs. According to the results, SF by LSPs are divided into four groups. As seen in Figure-2, these groups are as Failures related with the actual service of LSPs, Failures related with LSPs, Failures which are outside the LSP's Control, and Customer Mistakes which support the previous literature (e.g. McColl-Kennedy and Sparks, 2003). The detailed mapping of SF of LSPs could be seen in Figure 3 below.

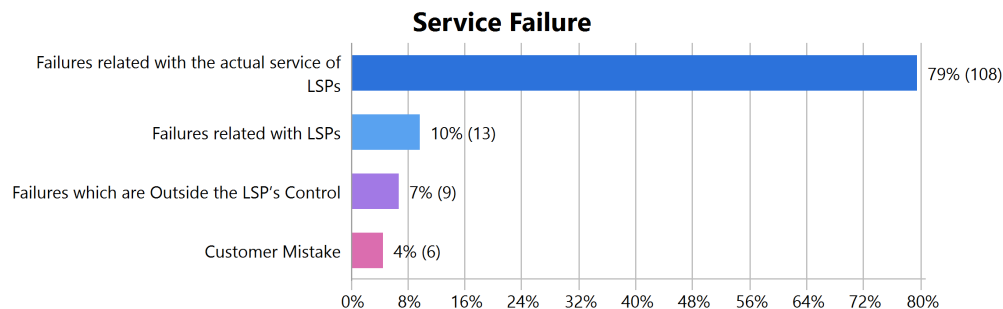


Figure 2. Service Failure Classification of LSPs

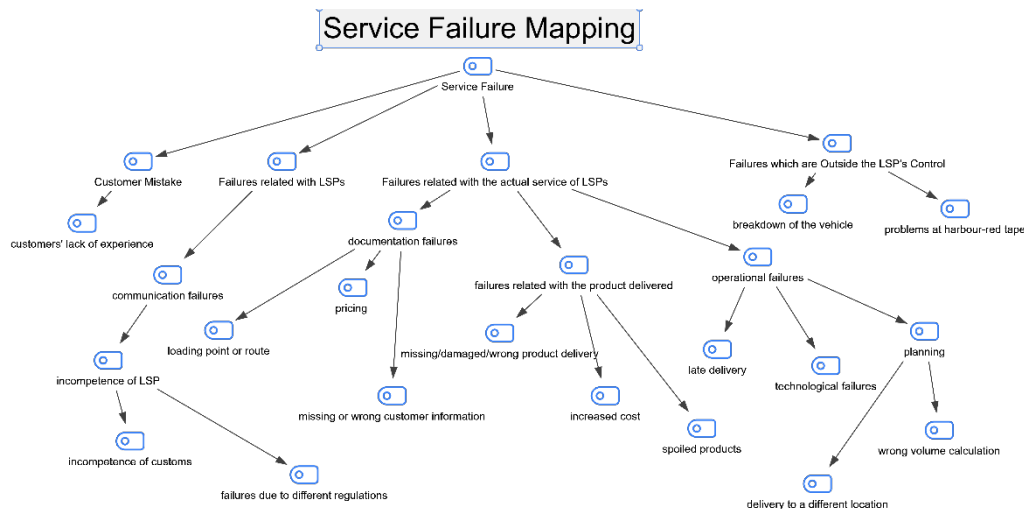


Figure 3. Service Failure Mapping of LSPs

As seen in Figure 2, the most common failure encountered by LSPs is Service Failures related with the actual service of LSPs, with a rate of 79 percent. Service failures related with the actual service of LSPs include operational failures, documentation failures, and failures related with the product delivered (See Table 5).

Table 5. Service Failures related with the actual service of LSPs -Subcodes

	n	%
Operational Failures	40	37,04
Documentation Failures	33	30,55
Failures related with the product delivered	35	32,41

The study results show that operational failures (late delivery, planning, technological failures) are more in number (37,04%), which is followed by failures related with the product delivered (32,42%) including spoiled or missing/damaged/wrong product delivery. The last classification is documentation failures (30,55%) which may occur due to missing/wrong customer information, pricing, and loading point/route information.

Failures related with LSPs generally occur due to the behaviours of employees which lead to communication errors. In addition, the inexperience/ignorance of LSPs employees or the inexperience/ignorance of other partners, such as customs, involved in the process can also be evaluated under this heading. The last two classification are called as failures which are outside of LSP's control and customer mistakes. Although the frequencies of failures which are outside of

LSP's control (%7) and customer mistakes (%4) are low, they are considered worth mentioning. The failures which are outside of LSP's control disrupt operations due to, for instance, weather conditions, strikes at ports, or breakdown of a vehicle. The last classification is customer mistakes which include customer's lack of experience. Since logistics sector includes multiple suppliers and multiple customers, this classification categories are considered noteworthy. Sample sentences given by the participants for service failure typologies are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Representative Quotes of Service Failure

Service Failures related with the actual service of LSPs	
<i>Sub-Quotes</i>	<i>Representative Quotes</i>
<i>Operational Failures</i>	<u>Late Delivery</u>: "Due to the events in the Suez Canal, the transit times have increased greatly and therefore the subsequent orders have been delayed." <u>Technological Failures</u>: "In cold chain transportation conducted via Ro-Ro, the refrigerated trailer malfunctioned, and the driver failed to notice it." <u>Planning</u>: "The event happened at a time when the warehouse was especially busy. This contributed to the overlook because several critical shipments were being handled concurrently."
<i>Failures related with the product delivered</i>	<u>Missing/damaged/wrong product delivery</u>: "After receiving confirmation from the land transporter that the ship's operation was overand while the ship was closing the hatches, we were contacted by the port and informed that 2 trucks had not entered the port and the ship was loaded incompletely." <u>Increased cost</u>: "Although we suggested another tow truck, they still did not accept it and we waited until it was repaired. The estimated arrival time and other costs increased considerably and caused problems." <u>Spoiled products</u>: "A mistake caused the shipment of perishable goods to be delayed, leading to the products spoiling...An incorrect delivery schedule was entered into our system, which resulted in the goods arriving spoiled to our customer."
<i>Documentation Failures</i>	<u>Missing/wrong customer information</u>: "The production department does not correctly write down the company information of which the material to be shipped." <u>Pricing</u>: "A customer who shipped multiple lots to Europe received an invoice due to incorrect pricing. Since the number of containers was high, the invoice amount was also high. The pricing error was a careless mistake resulting from our manual pricing."

Failures related with LSPs	
Communication Failures	“This error originated from a communication breakdown in the process of preparing documents accurately and on time.”
Failures which are outside the LSP’s Control	
Weather Conditions	“Last year, a system outage and shipping delay due to severe weather disrupted our customer’s retail operations.”
Break-down of a vehicle	“After the tow truck broke down at the European borders, we said we could arrange another tow truck, but they definitely did not accept it, they said that the load had to be transported with this truck, but there was no chance of the tow truck being repaired within the time they specified. Although we suggested another tow truck, they still did not accept it and we waited until it was repaired.”
Customer Mistakes	
Customer’s lack of experience	“A ship that we are the agency for received bunker service from outside the port despite our persistent warnings and bought it at an overseas tax-free price. As a result of this understanding by the customs, approximately 1.5 million liras of tax and penal sanctions were paid.”

The study results also provide findings on the problems encountered by LSPs due to service failures (See Figure 4). As stated in previous literature, the results encountered due to service failures can be grouped as customer dissatisfaction (e.g. Kelley et al., 1994), relationship damage (e.g. Nikbin et al., 2012), reputation damage (e.g. Pascual-Nebreda et al., 2023), and legal sanctions, all of which also have a strong influence on organization’s long-term value (Hanssens & Pauwels, 2016).

Although these findings show similarities to failures in B2C markets, there are also some differences. While B2C deals with emotional responses such as anger after failure (Harrison-Walker, 2019; Smith and Bolton, 2002), this study shows that LSPs do not face negative emotions after failure. Moreover, as the purchases are in more amounts in B2B markets, and as the relationships are formed by legally bounding contracts with duties established (Bilro et al., 2023), the possibility of customers taking legal action to compensate for the loss is higher in B2B market transactions. For instance, after the 2007-2008 crisis, for a bank network, legal battles had a significant impact on other partners who are associated with that bank (Mitra, 2023). Similar to the banking example, due to the study context, the results emphasize that in logistics networks involving more than one partner, the failure of any partner can affect other partners with a domino effect. This finding also supports previous SF studies (Allen et al., 2015) in the field of service supply chains (Yildirim et al., 2018).

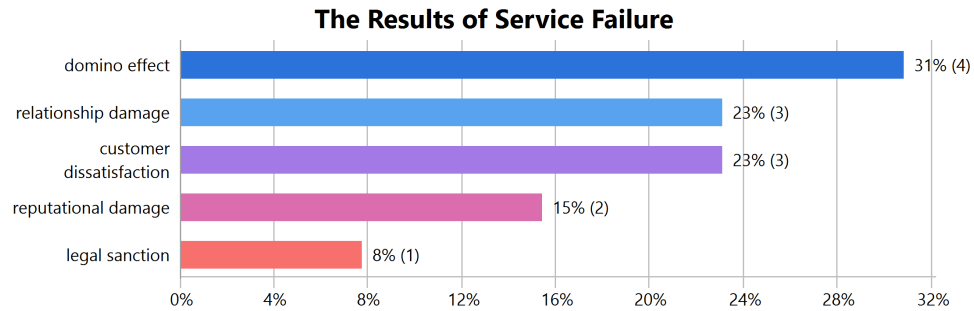


Figure 4. Consequences of Service Failure for LSPs

In a further analysis, the relationship between service failure classification and the consequences of service failure is examined. Figure 5 shows the relationship between service failure codes and codes of failure consequences. Each row shows a code or sub-code of LSP service failure and the coloured circles in columns reflect the number of critical incidents which were coded as having that type of impact. This means larger circles do not reflect the magnitude or strength of the effect, but a higher number of coded incidents.

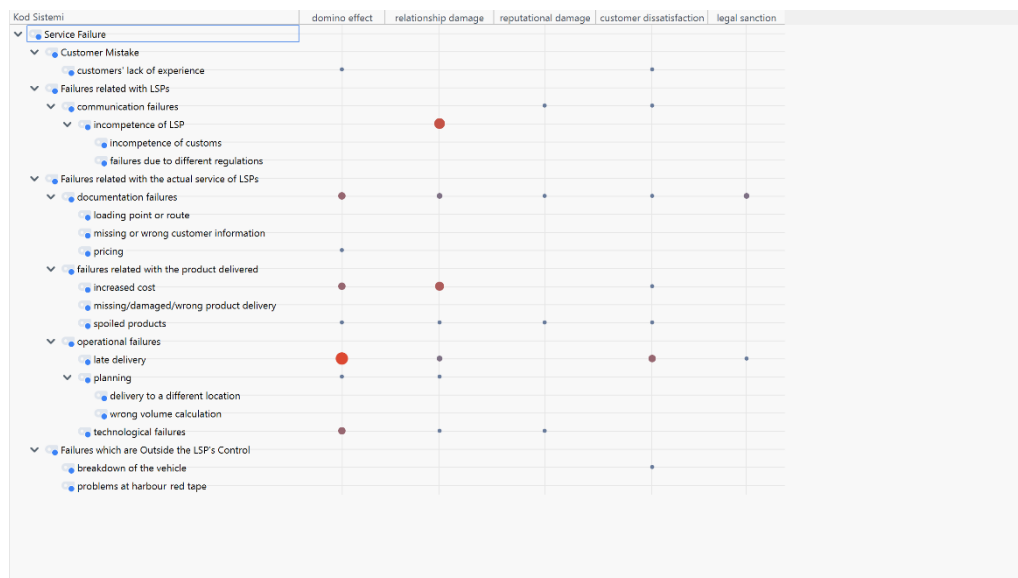


Figure 5. The code relationship matrix between service failure and consequences of service failure for LSPs

According to the results, apart from failures outside of LSP's control, all failures produce more than one behavioural outcome. While Table 6 demonstrates functionally distinct failure categories, Figure 5 demonstrates that failures are not homogeneous events, rather diverse failures produce structured, multiple behavioural outcomes. This means failures within logistics networks do not

produce single outcomes, they produce outcome configurations, which is an important contribution to existing literature. For instance, within the failures related with the actual service of LSPs code, documentation failures influence all five failure consequences, having moderate effect on domino effect, relationship damage and legal actions. These results indicate that documentation has high sensitivity in B2B Logistics. For operational failures, late delivery has strong impact on domino effect and moderately affects customer dissatisfaction and relationship damage, whereas technological failures have a moderate effect on domino effect. In terms of failures related with the product delivered, increased costs during the delivery process mostly influence relationship damage and moderately impacts domino effect.

As expected, since the failures related with LSPs include communication failures, especially incompetence of LSP has a strong impact on relationship damage. Another significant finding is related with failures which are outside the LSPs control. Although it is low, it still demonstrates effects on customer dissatisfaction. This highlights that even though the failure is uncontrollable, it still negatively affects customer perception. This finding contradicts existing literature on Attribution Theory. According to the theory, controllability (the perception of whether the provider could have controlled the failure) is a key mechanism (Weiner, 2000) and if consumers think that provider has high controllability on the failure, they are not forgiving (Suri et al., 2019), thus leading to more negative outcomes (Choi & Mattila, 2008). However, within a multi-actor context like in logistics delivery networks, different partners may differ in terms of controllability (Manu et al., 2021), which would create ambiguity for consumers regarding the source of responsibility (Dunn et al., 2021; Fu et al., 2026). Therefore, although the failure is outside of LSP's control, consumers may think that other partners in delivery network could have controlled the failure, which might create a domino effect on LSP, causing dissatisfaction. Moreover, although consumers may be the reason for the failure, the lack of experience of customers may influence customer dissatisfaction and may lead to domino effects. This emphasizes that even if the failure is not LSP's fault, it still damages satisfaction and relationships due to domino effects within logistics delivery networks.

Overall, the code relationship matrix of service failure and consequences of failure shows that different failures are associated with a unique pattern of results, suggesting that service failures act as multi-dimensional event within logistics delivery networks. By doing so, this mapping emphasizes a more nuanced approach is needed to capture the complexity of failure effects while

studying multi-actor contexts such as logistics delivery networks. Therefore, the following proposition is made:

P1: Service failures in logistics delivery networks tend to generate configurations of multiple co-occurring outcomes rather than single, isolated effects, since several impacts occur simultaneously through interconnected processes.

Besides, for instance, failures related with the actual service of LSPs could simultaneously lead to domino effects, relationship damage and reputational damage. As the results, such as domino effect, emphasize, these results may not affect just LSPs but also the partners in the network. This finding supports the findings of Clereen et al. (2013), stating due to a product-harm crisis, such as a failure, both the company and the category as a whole can be seriously damaged in terms of, such as decreasing sales/market share (Rubel et al. 2011), and reduced marketing effectiveness (van Heerde et al. 2007), both for the company and its partners. The effect of situation may be more positive for the competitors (e.g. increased market share), which may, in turn, alter market/competitive dynamics (Clereen et al., 2013). Therefore, it should be acknowledged that failure consequences cannot be thoroughly understood without recognizing its effect across partners. Therefore, the following proposition is made:

P2: Outcome configurations resulting from service failures in logistics delivery networks are likely to propagate across the networks, influencing inter-organizational relationships.

The last part of the study findings are the results related to the remedy for SF. According to the results, the methods used for remedy of SF can be divided into three groups as suggested by the previous literature (e.g. Blodgett et al., 1993; Seiders and Berry, 1998; See Figure 6) which are distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice as stated in Justice Theory.

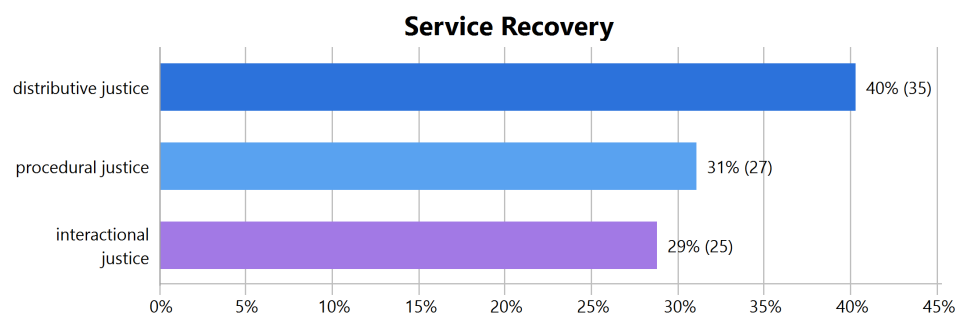


Figure 6. Service Recovery

As mentioned before, DJ covers the compensations offered to solve the problems experienced by the customers. In this context, situations such as refund and/or compensation for the damage, providing discounts or coupons for future purchases are included in the scope of DJ. Therefore, it can be said that DJ offers more concrete solutions. PJ refers to the perceived justice regarding the procedures used in the process, and variables such as speed, flexibility, and waiting time in the recovery process are used for the measurement. The respondents used phrases such as “immediately”, “speed”, “prompt action”, and “quickly” which show the importance of in-time response while providing recoveries, supporting previous literature (e.g. Liao et al., 2022). This also supports the views of Khamitov et al., (2020) on the need to investigate the effect of time both in SF and PHC literature. IJ, on the other hand, refers to how people are treated during the recovery process, for example, whether they are treated with courtesy and respect or rudely. Examples applied during LSP service recovery are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Representative Quotes of Service Recovery

Distributive Justice
“We arranged transportation for the misdirected container to reach the correct port. To both avoid loss and compensate our customer, we provided discounts on subsequent shipments.” “To compensate for the service failure, we immediately arranged a replacement shipment at no additional cost.”
Procedural Justice
“They quickly stopped the shipment, fixed the label, and delivered it with minimal delay.” “Initiate immediate corrective actions, such as rerouting trucks and arranging expedited shipping, to ensure perishable goods reach the retail customer as quickly as possible.”
Interactional Justice
“...First of all, we immediately informed our customer of the situation and apologized.”

A similar further analysis is made for the relationship between service failure and recovery classification of LSPs. Figure 7 visualizes how LSPs applied diverse justice strategies as a recovery action. Each row show a code or sub-code of LSP service failure and the coloured circles in columns reflect the frequency with which justice type was used.

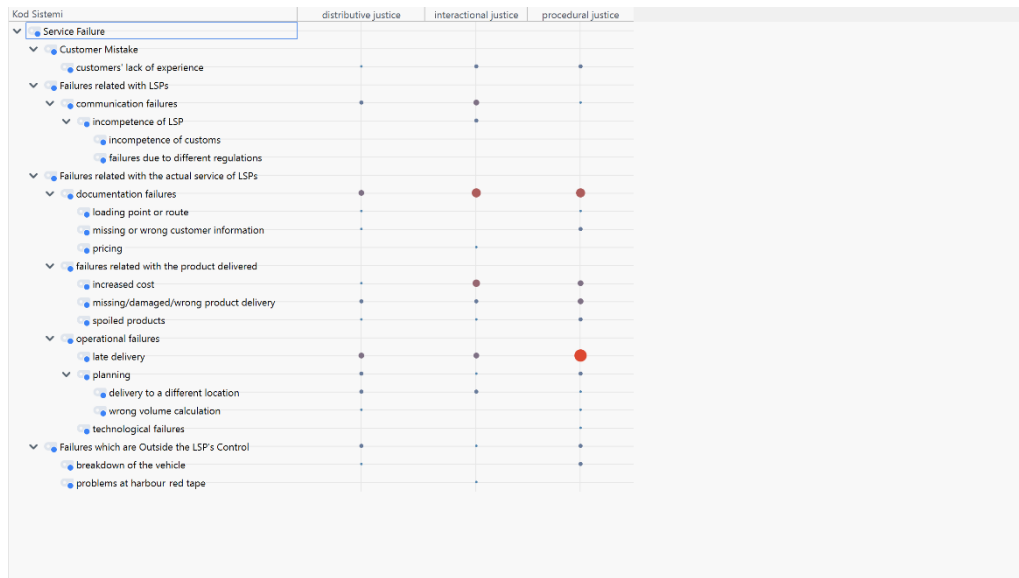


Figure 7. The code relationship matrix between service failure and service recovery of LSPs

While Figure 6 and Table 7 demonstrate functionally distinct service recovery categories, Figure 7 demonstrates that failures are not homogeneous events, thus diverse failures require structured, multiple recovery actions, supporting suggestions of, for instance, Zhu and Zolkiewski (2015) and Rao et al. (2024). This means failures do not recall for single recovery action, they rather require a configuration of recovery actions depending on the type of the failure.

According to the results, within the failures related with the actual service of LSPs code, documentation failures are mostly solved through all three justice types, but highly with interactional and procedural justice. The results of the analysis show that, LSPs make serious recovery attempts for documentation failures, and for operational failures, especially they provide procedural justice for these failures. As documentation and operational failures occurred during the service delivery process, it is natural to try to form a remedy to the failure with a PJ with, for example, a quick action and/or remedy, and accompany it with IJ and/or DJ. Failures related with the product delivered are, on the other hand, usually solved by offering interactional justice, and often procedural justice. This finding is contrary to the previous findings within, for instance, hotel and restaurant setting, which states that for failures related with product delivered, DJ has a stronger effect on customer satisfaction (Smith et al., 1999). The reason for this contradiction may be related with the relationships and contracts formed in logistics delivery networks. For example, most of the contracts contains the information related with the responsible parties, and the required

payments or refunds, this means DJ is already expected. Thus, consumers require additional recovery actions.

As the failures related with LSPs include communication failures, LSPs offer IJ as a remedy including an apology or providing a real-time information about the recovery process. However, after IJ, the distorted perception of customers' should also be reversed, therefore, it is better to also offer DJ and/or PJ. Another significant finding is, although the failure cannot be controlled by LSP, they still need to offer recoveries. In such a case, LSPs usually offer DJ and PJ. Similarly, even though there is a customer mistake, LSPs again offers PJ and IJ in order to restore customer satisfaction and preserve relationship. These findings supports the suggestions of Khamitov et al. (2020), recommending investigation of effectiveness of diverse recovery actions in accordance with heterogeneity of contexts, such as different failure categories. Therefore, the following proposition is made:

P3: Heterogeneous service failures in logistics delivery networks tend to require recovery actions that are simultaneously implemented and configured in alignment with specific failure types.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Although service failure and recovery are popular subjects in B2C markets, the studies in B2B markets are not high in numbers. Especially, when the logistics sector is considered, ensuring the delivery of a product to the end consumer requires management of several operations with multiple actors within a supply chain and/or delivery network, which should be operated carefully by LSPs. However, this complex structure with multiple touchpoints with multiple actors increases the possibility of service failures in logistics operations.

The present study contributes to the service failure and recovery literature in three ways. First, it demonstrates that SF leads to configurations of interrelated outcomes rather than isolated effects. Second, it also conceptualizes service recovery as a configurational process, emphasizing that different failures require multiple, and aligned recovery actions that are implemented simultaneously. Last, the study discloses that outcome configurations propagate across actors in logistics delivery networks through domino effect and thus affect inter-organizational relationships. By doing so, we present a multi-level and configurational perspective on SF literature.

The findings reveal SF typology including Failures related with the actual service of LSPs, Failures related with LSPs, Failures which are outside the LSP's Control, and Customer Mistakes. Due to these failures, B2B customers may demonstrate dissatisfaction, which may have a negative impact on the relationship and thus the reputation of the LSPs. These negative outcomes are not desired by the actors in the network as apart from customer dissatisfaction, they increase the cost of the process by, for instance, decreasing effectiveness and increasing brand vulnerability (van Heerde et al., 2007). Moreover, as B2B customers make higher volume purchases (Kuster-Boluda et al., 2020), to compensate for their loss, they may be more likely to take legal action towards LSPs. Lastly, since the operations run by LSPs are complex, and including multiple parties, one's failure creates a domino effect, impacting both the company and other actors in the network, meaning the whole delivery process.

For instance, from operational failures, late delivery has a strong effect on domino effect which means if there is a late delivery in any process, it leads to negative effects on other partners too. Moreover, documentation failures lead to all the consequences mentioned above, having moderate effects on domino effect, relationship damage and legal action. Increased cost, within failures related with the product delivered, may harm the relationship between partners. In addition, there are failures related with LSPs, which include the behaviours of employees and thus creating communication failures. As B2B processes are found to be more relational (Coviello and Brodie, 2001), the high failure number in this category and its strong effect on relationships are not surprising. In summary, it is possible to say late delivery and LSP incompetence are the most damaging failures mentioned. Documentation failures could be critical as they may cause legal sanctions, despite moderate effect, the consequence could be serious. Failures which are outside LSPs control and customer mistakes still create customer dissatisfaction, that may emphasize B2B customers' expectation for proactive problem management. Moreover, these failures impact on customer dissatisfaction may further be examined by further studies that may focus on the doer effect of the failure, and severity of the failure.

Although failures may not be inevitable during the process, LSPs try to recover from the failures and to turn dissatisfied customers into satisfied ones. By acknowledging the failure types, LSPs may avoid these failures, and they may restore the relationship with customers, and in turn, they may increase long-term marketing effectiveness for both the company and other actors in the logistics network. Accordingly, by positioning failures in logistics context as a network-level

disruption, this paper contributes to the literature by proposing a configurational perspective where different types of failures produce configurations of multiple co-occurring outcomes and the extension of these outcome configurations to the logistics network by affecting inter-organizational relationships.

Furthermore, as mentioned, to avoid these negative outcomes and restore relationships with customers and partners, LSPs are taking corrective actions, providing recoveries for failures. LSPs are providing remedies by offering a configuration of distributive, procedural and interactional justice. From a recovery perspective, procedural justice is more dominant for operational failures (i.e.: late delivery) and documentation failures whereas interactional justice is prominent for communication failures, failures related with the product delivered (i.e.: increased cost), and communication failures. Distributive justice seems less frequently used, reflecting LSPs endeavor to avoid financial loss. This is also evident as they are not providing recovery when failure occurs due to the incompetence of customs (another actor in the network). This may seem practical, however previous literature (e.g. Allen et al., 2015) emphasizes that failures made by other actors in supply chains and/or networks may also negatively affect the behavioural outcomes of the company. Therefore, from a managerial perspective, these failures should not be overlooked. From a theoretical perspective, future studies may take Attribution Theory as a foundation of the study and investigate the effects of different failures made by different actors in the logistics delivery network on consumers' behavioural outcomes such as satisfaction, and repurchase intention, and/or market performance of the company.

From a practical point of view, as operational (especially late deliveries) and documentation failures seem to be more significant, these failures should be more carefully monitored. Furthermore, it is important for LSPs to tailor their recovery efforts. As B2B processes are found to be more relational, combining procedural justice with interactional justice with fair, real-time, and empathetic communication would provide better outcomes. To achieve this, communication training could be given to employees to increase perceived fairness. Due to these findings, similar to existing literature (e.g. Rao et al., 2024), this study also proposes a configurational approach for service recovery actions.

This study is not without limitations. For example, future studies may increase the sample to have more critical incidents. Moreover, as CIT requires respondents to remember and write down the failures and recoveries, time spent was a major issue for respondents. For a deeper analysis in-

depth interviews or focus groups may be used in further studies. Lastly, post-recovery satisfaction and/or the level of relationship between LSPs and their customers could be examined in further studies.

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