



You Reap What You Sow: How Customer Perceptions of Justice and Support Enhance Customer Citizenship Behaviors

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Prior studies have paid relatively little attention to the mechanisms that underpin how the organizational good intentions perceived by customers (including customer perceived justice and support) may result in customers engaging in voluntary behaviors (i.e., customer citizenship behaviors [CCBs]). Thus, drawing upon the theories of social exchange, organizational support, and social identity as well as the stimulus-organism-response framework, this study aimed to examine the mediating roles of two vital relational elements (customer-based brand reputation [CBR] and customer affective commitment [CAC]) in the relationships between customer perceived justice (CPJ), customer perceived support (CPS) and target-based CCBs (helping, advocacy, tolerance, and feedback) in the smartphone after-sales service field. The data were gathered from 284 Egyptian customers using a survey questionnaire, and the proposed model was analyzed via SEM using AMOS software. The findings suggest that CBR plays a mediating role in the relationship between CPJ and two dimensions (i.e., advocacy and tolerance) of target-based CCBs. Moreover, CAC plays a mediating role in the relationship between CPS and three dimensions (i.e., helping, advocacy, and feedback) of target-based CCBs. This study's results enrich the literature on after-sales services and target-based CCBs by identifying how CPJ and CPS motivate CCBs through CBR and CAC.

Keywords: Perceived procedural justice, customer perceived support, customer citizenship behaviors, customer-based brand reputation, customer affective commitment

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Recent studies have shown that prosocial, voluntary customer involvement activities (i.e., customer citizenship behaviors [CCBs]) are essential resources that boost businesses' profitability and brand performance (e.g., Carlson *et al.*, 2019; Choi and Burnham, 2021; Roy *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, such voluntary behaviors create advantages for both the customer and the organization as a result of the extra-role activities and contact with organizations they facilitate (De Nicola *et al.*, 2023; Wu *et al.*, 2017). CCBs are seen as a strategic requirement since they can generate long-term competitive advantages (Hossain *et al.*, 2023). In an effort to gain such a competitive edge, businesses actively seek to enhance customer citizenship behaviors. However, encouraging more customers to voluntarily engage in social activities may be difficult. This form of behavior forces

customers to expend nonmonetary resources (e.g., time and effort) for no apparent gain (Choi and Burnham, 2021; Roy *et al.*, 2018). Drawing upon theories of social exchange (Wayne *et al.*, 1997), equity (Adams, 1965), and organizational support (Chen *et al.*, 2009; Molinillo *et al.*, 2020), a rising number of studies have discussed customer perceived justice (CPJ) (Choi and Lotz, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2018; Tonder and Petzer, 2022) and customer perceived support (CPS) (Ali *et al.*, 2022; Keh and Wei, 2001; Ning and Hu, 2022) and their effect on customers' voluntary behaviors. Nevertheless, previous research has paid surprisingly little attention to the underlying mechanisms through which consumer-perceived justice and support may lead to customer citizenship behaviors. By addressing this research gap, this study makes several novel contributions to the marketing literature.

First, there is a lack of knowledge on the mechanisms through which CPJ improves target-based customer citizenship behaviors (target-based CCBs) in the after-sales service sector. Despite some papers revealing that enhanced customer-based brand reputation (CBR) (e.g., Cintamür, 2023; Ziaullah *et al.*, 2017) is a critical effect of customer perceived justice, as of yet, only a few studies have examined whether CBR plays a substantial mediating role in the relationship between CPJ and CCBs (Cintamür, 2023). To achieve that aim, the present research addresses the ignored mediating influence of CBR in the CPJ–CCBs relationship.

Second, although some research has investigated customer affective commitment (CAC) (e.g., Choi *et al.*, 2014; Liao *et al.*, 2022) as a consequence of CPS in addition to its role as a strong predictor of customer citizenship behaviors (Ahmadi and Ataei, 2022; Chelminski and Coulter, 2011), limited research has investigated whether CAC plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between CPS and CCBs (Choi and Lotz, 2018). This oversight may prevent us from establishing a full picture of how CPS affects CCBs. Thus, the present study fills this gap by empirically examining the mediating role of CAC in terms of the impact of CPS on target-based CCBs in the smartphone after-sales service sector in Egypt.

Third, the current study expands on prior research (Cintamür, 2023) by considering CPS as a mediating variable linking CPJ and CBR, which may play an important role in absorbing and exploiting CPJ to improve

brand reputation. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first study to empirically examine the mediating mechanism of CPS in determining the influence of CPJ on CBR in the Egyptian smartphone after-sales service industry.

In sum, this investigation aims to answer the following three study questions: (1) Does CBR serve as a critical mediator in the relationship between CPJ and dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., helping, advocacy, tolerance, and feedback)? (2) Does CAC play a vital role in the relationship between CPS and the dimensions of target-based CCBs? (3) Does CPS play a mediating role in the relationship between CPJ and CBR?

The remainder of the current investigation is structured as follows. The subsequent section provides a concise overview of the theoretical foundation and develops our hypotheses. The third section describes our methodology. The findings are reported in Section 4 and addressed in Section 5. The sixth section outlines the theoretical and managerial consequences. Section 7 concludes, then discusses the limitations of our study, and provides recommendations for practitioners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Underpinnings

Theories that were adopted in this study include social exchange (Blau, 1964), organizational climate (Schneider, 1990), organizational support (Molinillo *et al.*, 2020), social identity (Leaper, 2011; Tajfel *et al.*, 1979), and Stimulus-Organism-Response framework (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974).

-Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory (SET) is concerned with social interactions between people in which exchange partners anticipate gaining a variety of advantages from exchange connections (Blau, 1964). Social exchanges involve not only physical advantages (e.g., products, services) but also intangible advantages (e.g., affection, information, appreciation) (Liao, 2008). As per SET (Chan *et al.*, 2017), when one party provides a benefit or

engages in positive conduct, the other party feels obligated to reciprocate that beneficial behavior. The current research uses SET to explain the relationships between CPJ, CPS, CAC, and Target-based CCBs.

Theories of Organizational Climate and Organizational Support

In accordance with organizational climate theory (OCT) (Schneider, 1990), when individuals perceive a service environment to be supportive, they are more willing to participate in behaviors that contribute to the growth of their organization (Schneider, 1990). Likewise, organizational support theory (OST) contends that when employees perceive that their requirements are being met by the organization, they reciprocate by engaging in comparable supportive behaviors (e.g., helping peers and giving valuable recommendations) (Molinillo *et al.*, 2020). The present investigation uses OCT and OST to explain the relationships between CPS and Target-based CCBs.

Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework

As per this model, social inputs (S) in people's surroundings directly affect their affective and mental states (O), which in turn affect their behaviors (R) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theoretical framework has been extensively utilized in papers on the impacts of environmental determinants on voluntary behaviors (Aljarah and Alrawashdeh, 2020). Thus, the current study is based on the S-O-R theory to explain the mediating role of CAC between CPS and Target-based CCBs.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) (Leaper, 2011; Tajfel *et al.*, 1979) addresses how social identities influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward their in-group and other out-groups. SIT argues that people categorize themselves and others into multiple social groups to define and locate themselves in a given environment (Turner, 2010). Individuals' social identities are most influential when they consider belonging to a specific group as being important to their self-concept and have strong emotional attachments to the group (Marique *et al.*, 2012). Hence, people seek to identify with groups that are perceived favorably (Marique *et al.*,

2012) and behave in a way that promotes those groups (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). In the context of customer behaviors, SIT has been used to explain the factors that boost participation in customer citizenship behaviors (e.g., De Nicola *et al.*, 2023). Our study depends on SIT to explain the relationships between CBR and Target-based CCBs.

Study Variables

-Customer Perceived Justice

The equity theory is the foundation of the concept of justice or fairness, which has been widely used in a wide range of fields to describe how people interact socially and during transactions (van Tonder and Petzer, 2023; Xing *et al.*, 2020). As a result, marketing researchers define service justice as consumers' judgments of the degree of fairness in the service provider's behavior in connection to their social exchange relationship with the firm (Seiders and Berry, 1998). Perceived justice is described as the degree to which consumers perceive that they are treated fairly by organizations and can rely on them to be equitable (Choi and Lotz, 2018). Three factors are often used to assess perceived justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2019: 664). Distributive justice (Voorhees and Brady, 2005: 194) can be described as "the extent to which customers perceive that they are treated equitably in relation to the eventual results of the service encounter." Procedural justice (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002: 240) is defined as the perceived justice of rules and procedures that underlie the service, while interactional justice (Voorhees and Brady, 2005: 194) indicates "the level of fairness consumers perceive while dealing with a firm's individuals." Customers' impressions of procedural fairness provided by the smartphone after-sales service industry are the focus of the present investigation. Since service delivery in the current context is based on multiple procedures, procedural justice is anticipated to be the most relevant dimension. Moreover, among the three categories of fairness, procedural justice has received the least attention in the literature.

-Customer Perceived Support

Organizational studies define perceived organizational support (POS) as how individuals perceive an

organization to value their dedication and loyalty (Shore and Wayne, 1993). By adapting the POS concept to the consumer context, CPS becomes an extension of the notion of POS. Customers, as partial workers, can also believe that organizations that interact with them genuinely support and are concerned about them (Keh and Wei, 2001).

-Customer-Based Brand Reputation

According to Fombrun *et al.* (2000: 243), brand reputation refers to the overall evaluation of an organization's capacity to provide valuable results to a representative set of stakeholders. Although brand reputation is correctly thought of as a multifaceted construct with a wide variety of stakeholders (Walsh *et al.*, 2006), the present research only focuses on brand reputations that are based on customers. CBR is often described as the customers' accumulating views, perceptions, and attitudes regarding a firm (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Jung and Seock, 2016).

-Customer Affective Commitment

The theory of relationship marketing forms the foundation of customer commitment (Choi and Lotz, 2018). Commitment is described by Dwyer *et al.* (1987) as an implied and explicit agreement to maintain a business relationship between a purchaser (customer) and a supplier (service provider). When forming long-term ties with customers (Panchapakesan *et al.*, 2022) marketing experts believe that commitment is widely expressed as affective commitment (Fullerton, 2003). Affective commitment is built on emotions and affective ties to the commitment structure (Porter *et al.*, 1974). In the present investigation, affective commitment is related to how customers feel about smartphone brands' after-sales services as well as how attached they are to those brands (Choi and Lotz, 2018).

-Target-Based Customer Citizenship Behaviors

Target-based CCBs refer to consumers' voluntary behaviors. It is useful to analyze the service-providing firm as a complete entity throughout the transaction or service delivery process (Li and Shi, 2022). The components

of target-based CCBs, according to Groth (2005) and Yi and Gong (2013), involve helping other customers (HC), advocacy, tolerance, and feedback. HC describes voluntarily supporting other customers with services in order for them to have a pleasant experience (e.g., by providing other customers with guidance, information, and assistance) (Anaza, 2014; Gong and Yi, 2021). Advocacy is defined as when customers recommend service providers to others (Fullerton, 2003) voluntarily and out of a feeling of responsibility to organizations that have benefited them (Kim and Choi, 2016; van Tonder and Petzer, 2023). Advocacy may assist in spreading positive word of mouth about the service provider to customers' friends and relatives via social networking (Arguello *et al.*, 2020; van Tonder and Petzer, 2023). Tolerance refers to a customer's tendency to remain patient when a service fails to meet their expectations, as in the case of delays or mistakes (De Nicola *et al.*, 2023; Yi and Gong, 2013). Feedback includes the information that customers share with staff, which can be used improve the service provider's methods (De Nicola *et al.*, 2023).

Hypotheses Development

-CPJ and CBR

Service consumers' evaluations of brand reputation are the result of their interactions with service providers, their employees, administrators, other customers, and the services themselves (Cintamür, 2023; Walsh and Beatty, 2007). Prior organizational research has established that organizational justice influences an organization's reputation (e.g., Bustaman *et al.*, 2020; Skarlicki and Kulik, 2004). In contrast, the CPJ–CBR relationship is relatively poorly understood in the customer context. For instance, recent research has empirically revealed that dimensions of CPJ (i.e., procedural, distributive, and interactional) have a favorable influence on the reputation of digital shopping platforms (Ziaullah *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, a sample of 304 university students in Germany confirmed that perceived distributive fairness shapes organizations' reputation (Marcinkowski *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, an earlier investigation has shown that two dimensions of CPJ (distributive and interactional) affect consumers' assessments of airlines' reputation (Cintamür, 2023). As a result, further study is needed to clarify the nature of this relationship. In light of these research findings, it is

reasonable to assume that CPJ impacts how customers evaluate brands' reputation. Hence, the present investigation proposes the following hypothesis:

H₁: CPJ has a positive impact on CBR.

-CBR and Target-based CCBs

It may be helpful to utilize a perspective of SIT (Tajfel *et al.*, 1979) to further understand why a strong CBR can result in discretionary behaviors such as CCBs. In accordance with SIT (Tajfel *et al.*, 1979), customers build and boost a sense of self that is based on the group (or brand) they belong to. From the perspective of SIT, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) demonstrated that strong customer–organization relationships are often the outcome of customers' identification with specific (and often well-known) companies. This leads to “consumer–organization identifications” that encourage customers to be “champions” of these organizations and their value propositions (De Nicola *et al.*, 2023). These psychological ties between consumers and a business may cause customers to feel connected to and interested in that company and therefore likely to recommend it to others while supporting and defending its conduct (De Nicola *et al.*, 2023; De Nicola and Anees, 2022; Hur *et al.*, 2018; Wolter *et al.*, 2021).

Research has indicated that customers who associate with reputable organizations increase both their self-concept and voluntary behaviors (i.e., CCBs) (Abdelmoety *et al.*, 2022; Bartikowski and Walsh, 2011; De Nicola *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, prior studies have proven that CBR has a positive impact on the dimensions of CCBs. For instance, De Nicola *et al.* (2023) focused on three of the dimensions of CCBs (HC, tolerance, and feedback); Indah and Nizar (2021) studied the linkage between CBR and word of mouth (i.e., advocacy). Other papers considered CCBs as being two-dimensional (Bartikowski and Walsh, 2011). To date, few scholars (Cintamür, 2023) have studied the relationship between CBR and the three dimensions of CCBs in the context of the airline sector. Several academics have suggested that the link between CBR and CCBs be analyzed in terms of various CCBs dimensions (Bartikowski and Walsh, 2011). The current investigation aims to respond

to this suggestion by experimentally evaluating the relationship between CBR and the dimensions of CCBs. Thus, we draw upon SIT and earlier research to propose the following hypothesis:

H₂: CBR has a positive impact on target-based CCBs: (a) HC, (b) Advocacy, (c) Customer tolerance, and (d) Feedback.

-The Mediating Role of CBR between CPJ and Target-Based CCBs

Drawing upon SET, a customer who perceives that they are treated fairly by a business will reciprocate this behavior by exhibiting CCBs to maintain the principle of reciprocity (Chan *et al.*, 2017; Cintamür, 2023). In addition, Choi *et al.* (2019) indicate that consumers may exhibit citizenship behaviors toward the company if they are treated fairly. Consequently, CPJ may impact CCBs. The organizational behavior research, based on SET, demonstrates that when workers feel that they are treated fairly by their organizations, they are more likely to demonstrate engagement behaviors and a higher degree of commitment (Payne and Webber, 2006). In line with this research stream, prior customer behavior literature (e.g., Roy *et al.*, 2018; van Tonder and Petzer, 2023; Yi and Gong, 2008b) has demonstrated that CPJ and CCBs are positively linked.

On the other hand, when assessing the links between CPJ, CBR, and CCBs in a sequential framework, CPJ, as an image-based construct (Cintamür, 2023), should be an antecedent of CBR because constructing a brand reputation takes considerable time (Cintamür, 2023; Mahon, 2002; Roberts and Dowling, 2002) and changes in image-based constructs may arise in advance of changes in brand reputation (Gray and Balmer, 1998). Additionally, since it has been established that both CPJ (Di *et al.*, 2010; Roy *et al.*, 2018; van Tonder and Petzer, 2023) and CBR (De Nicola *et al.*, 2023; De Nicola and Anees, 2022) result in CCBs, CCBs should be a result of both CPJ and CBR. In the light of the above discussion, CBR may act as a bridge between CPJ and CCBs. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: CBR mediates the link between CPJ and target-based CCBs: (a) HC, (b) Advocacy, (c) Customer tolerance, and (d) Feedback.

-CPS and CAC

According to claims by Blau (1964) in his social exchange theory, people are more likely to invest interaction efforts toward things that enhance their benefits due to their commitment to a particular object. On the foundation of this logic, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) point out that POS increases affective commitment via the fulfillment of needs for respect, appreciation, and affiliation. In the customer context, prior empirical studies also demonstrate that CPS has a positive influence on customers' commitment (e.g., Bettencourt, 1997; Choi and Lotz, 2018; Liao *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, the present study draws upon SET and prior research to propose the following hypothesis:

H₄: CPS has a positive impact on CAC.

-CAC and Target-Based CCBs

In the current investigation, social exchange theory is employed to clarify the relationship between CAC and CCBs. Based on SET, individuals that are deeply committed to their company tend to reciprocate by participating in activities that benefit the firm (Choi *et al.*, 2014). This notion is consistent with Meyer *et al.* (1993), who indicated that affective commitment is strongly linked with positive emotional perceptions, which in turn promote proactive behaviors (e.g., cooperation, solving problems). Carmeli (2005) confirms that a solid affective commitment to a company creates a high-value set of voluntary behaviors in the workplace.

In a similar vein, consumers are more likely to be enthusiastic about performing voluntary behaviors when they have a strong emotional attachment to a certain brand (Choi *et al.*, 2014). There is a great deal of interest among scholars and practitioners in investigating commitment, as it has a major effect on consumer behaviors. Recent research (Ahmadi and Ataei, 2022; Chelminski and Coulter, 2011) has demonstrated that consumers with a strong emotional attachment to a brand are expected to engage in behavioral intentions (e.g., disseminating positive recommendations, promoting the firm, and participating in the brand community), which are regarded as affective indicators of consumer advocacy. In addition, another investigation identified a significant link between CAC and firm-oriented CCBs (e.g., tolerance and feedback) (Bartikowski and Walsh, 2011). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₅: CAC has a positive impact on target-based CCBs: (a) HC, (b) Advocacy, (c) Customer tolerance, and (d) Feedback.

-The Mediating Role of CAC in the Relationship between CPS and Target-Based CCBs

The present investigation relies on organizational climate theory (OCT) (Schneider, 1990) and organizational support theory (OST) (Molinillo *et al.*, 2020) to shed light on the relationship between CPS and CCBs. By extending OCT and OST to the context of customer behaviors, customers are more willing to engage in voluntary behaviors when they perceive that the organization values them and cares about their needs (Ning and Hu, 2022). Empirical outcomes confirm this relationship. For example, Choi *et al.* (2019) emphasize that if a firm offers support, customers may engage in citizenship behaviors toward it. Earlier research (Zhu *et al.*, 2016) has also shown that customers participate in CCBs after receiving social-emotional and instrumental assistance from other customers. Hence, customers are more likely to engage in voluntary behaviors toward an organization if they feel appreciated and cared for due to the reciprocity norm (Cintamür, 2023).

On the other hand, it has been extensively established that CPS affects CAC (e.g., Choi and Lotz, 2018; Liao *et al.*, 2022). In addition, CAC constitutes a vital factor that affects CCBs (e.g., Ahmadi and Ataei, 2022; Bartikowski and Walsh, 2011). This result indicates that CAC may play a mediating role in the relationship between CPS and CCBs. The role of CAC between CPS and CCBs can be reasonably explained theoretically based on the stimulus-organism-response framework (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Therefore, customers who receive support (stimulus) from an organization build related CAC (organism), which in turn promotes CCBs (response).

Although CAC can serve as a mediator in the relationship between perceptions and behaviors (Choi and Lotz, 2018), scholars have paid even less attention to the role of CAC as a mediator in the CPS–CCBs relationship. Prior research has been limited to examining whether CAC is a significant mediator in the relationship between CPS and CCBs as a whole (Choi and Lotz, 2018). Accordingly, this paper extends the existing literature by investigating whether CAC plays a mediating role in the relationship between CPS and

the three dimensions of CCBs.

Drawing upon the previous research and SOR theory, CAC can be a bridge for boosting voluntary behaviors from customers through CPS. In accordance with this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₆: CAC mediates the link between CPS and Target-based CCBs: (a) HC, (b) Advocacy, (c) Customer tolerance, and (d) Feedback.

-The Mediating Role of CPS in the Relationship between CPJ and CBR

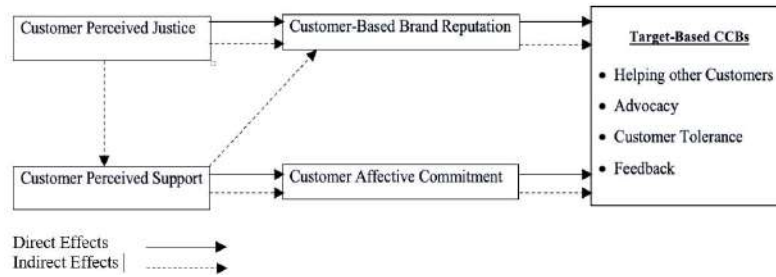
Previous investigations have supported the significance of perceived fairness as a key element in the direct link with perceived support (e.g., Choi and Lotz, 2018; DeConinck, 2010; Loi *et al.*, 2006; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Moreover, recent research has demonstrated that perceived support affects brand reputation (Cintamür, 2023). In keeping with social exchange theory, individuals who perceive that they are supported and encouraged by their firm feel bound to make every effort to assist it (Blau, 1964). Individuals become more proactive and enthusiastic as a result, which enhances the organization's reputation (Hossin *et al.*, 2021). This relationship implies that there may be a mediating influence of CPS in the relationship between CPJ and CBR; however, this potential mechanism has yet to be investigated in the literature. Consequently, the current study proposes that the addition of CPS as a bridge between CPJ and CBR may make a critical contribution to the theoretical understanding of this phenomenon. The theoretical and empirical arguments presented above enable us to suggest the following hypothesis:

H₇: CPS mediates the relationship between CPJ and CBR.

Conceptual Framework

A review of the studies discussed above was used to develop the present model (see Figure 1). It consists of three parts, with CPJ and CPS as the independent variables, CBR and CAC as the mediating mechanisms, and dimensions of target-based CCBs as dependent variables.

METHODOLOGY



Source: Authors' presentation

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Sample and Procedure

The authors gathered data from the customers of smartphone after-sales services in Egypt via social networks (e.g., Facebook, Telegram, WeChat, and WhatsApp) between January and March 2022, and 319 completed surveys were received. We employed a strict screening approach to exclude questionnaires with blatant regularity or brief response times and excluded 35 questionnaires. As a result, our final dataset includes 284 valid questionnaires. The authors reduced nonresponse bias by ensuring respondents' privacy in their replies and notifying them that there were no "correct" or "incorrect" answers. Respondents were also urged to answer the questions truthfully. The response rate was 82.8%.

Questionnaire Design and Measures

The online questionnaire method was used to gather data. Based on previous research, we used scales with high confidence and validity assessments. The questionnaire was prepared in English and then translated into Arabic.

The first section requested demographic data from the participants. The second section used a five-point Likert scale ranging from one ("strongly disagree") to five ("strongly agree"). The measures for the seven categories of variables utilized in this research are as follows.

CPJ: We adapted a three-item scale (Reliability = 0.91) created by Yi and Gong (2008a) to measure CPJ. Its Cronbach's alpha was 0.889. Sample items were "Overall, after-sales service procedures followed by this

brand were fair” and “With respect to the policies and procedures of after-sales services, this brand handled my encounter fairly.”

CPS: We adapted a three-item scale (Reliability = 0.93) created by Choi and Lotz (2018) to measure CPS. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.869. Sample items were “The service provider values my contribution to its well-being” and “The service provider cares about my opinions”.

CBR: We adapted a three-item scale (Reliability = 0.87) created by Bianchi *et al.* (2019) to measure CBR. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.801. Sample items were “My smartphone brand is well respected on the market” and “In my opinion, my mobile phone brand is one of the best on the market”.

CAC: We adapted a five-item scale (Reliability = 0.90) developed by Choi and Lotz (2018) to measure CAC. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.90. Sample items were “I am proud to belong to my smartphone brand” and “I feel emotionally attached to my mobile phone brand”.

HC: We adapted a four-item scale (Reliability = 0.898) created by Yi and Gong (2013) to measure HC. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.873. Sample items were “I have helped other customers when they seemed to have problems” and “I have given advice to other customers”.

Advocacy: We adapted a three-item scale (Reliability = 0.92) created by Yi and Gong (2013) to measure advocacy. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.913. Sample items were “I have recommended this brand to others” and “I have said positive things about this brand to others”.

Customer Tolerance: We adapted a three-item scale (Reliability = 0.724) created by Yi and Gong (2013) to measure customer tolerance. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.751. Sample items were “I have put up with when the after-sales services were not delivered as expected” and “I have been patient and waited for the employee to recover from a mistake”.

Feedback: We adapted a three-item scale (Reliability = 0.646) created by Yi and Gong (2013) to measure feedback. Its Cronbach’s alpha was 0.793. Sample items were “When I had a useful idea on how to improve after-sales services, I let the staff of this brand know” and “When I experienced a problem, I let the staff of this brand know about it.”

Analysis Techniques

We summarized and analyzed the data using both AMOS v. 24 and SPSS v. 26 software. To empirically evaluate the hypotheses, we utilized SEM via AMOS. The multiple mediation model was evaluated using the bootstrapping analysis method in AMOS v. 24.

RESULTS

Measurement Model Assessment

Confirmation factor analysis was used in the first stage to evaluate the model's validity and fit. The findings demonstrated that the proposed study model (CMIN/DF = 1.766 < 3; RMR= 0.037 closer to 0; TLI = 0.943 ≥ 0.90; CFI= 0.952 > 0.90; RMSEA = 0.052 < 0.08; PClose = 0.318 > 0.05) fit the data gathered with high accuracy.

Common Method Bias (CMB)

In our current paper, CMB was addressed statistically. Firstly: Harman's one-factor test was done using the unrotated factor solution. The findings revealed that the issue associated with the data's CMB was not substantial, with a variance explained of 35.425%, less than 50%. (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Secondly, a full collinearity test was applied to the current model to identify any contamination caused by CMB. A multicollinearity check indicated that VIF values for all constructions are good (VIF < 5) (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, Tolerance values were satisfactory (Tol > 0.20) (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Test of Normality

The current investigation examined the normality using the statistical methods of Skewness (Skew) and Kurtosis (Kurt) via AMOS v. 24. Thus, the present findings (Skew and Kurt were within a range of -2 to +2 and -7 to +7, respectively) indicated that all standards were satisfied (Byrne, 2016; Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Reliability and Validity Analysis

The factor loadings of the constructs were examined, as indicated in Table 1 (see Appendix-I), and the results

showed that they were > 0.50 . According to Gerbing and Anderson (1988), this shows convergent validity. The reliability of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). The α values for all constructs (Table 1) were > 0.70 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating a satisfactory level of reliability. The constructs' reliability and validity were determined using composite reliability (CR) testing (Brunner and SÜß, 2005). As illustrated in Table 1, the constructs' CR values are greater than the acceptable threshold of > 0.70 . Likewise, the average variance extracted (AVE) was computed to ensure validity. Based on Fornell and Larcker (1981), obtaining all the values > 0.50 indicates satisfactory construct validity.

Next, two approaches were used to evaluate discriminant validity: First, the authors assessed if the square roots of the AVE of each diagonal construct were higher than all correlations in off-diagonal space (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The results demonstrated that the squared AVE was greater than the squared correlation of the research's variables. Thus, all of the indicators exhibited satisfactory discriminant validity. Second, we used the Heterotrait-Monotrait Correlations Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The findings revealed that all the HTMT ratios are < 0.85 , confirming satisfactory discriminant validity.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Respondents were Egyptian customers of various ages. The gender distribution was practically equal (45.07% female). Most (60.21%) of the participants were between the ages of 20 and 30 years. The demographic information is illustrated in Table 2 (see Appendix-II).

Structural Model Assessment

The proposed framework provided an adequate fit to the data (CMIN/DF = 2.293 $<$ 3.00; p -Value $<$.001; CFI = .914 \geq .90; TLI = .903 $>$.90; IFI = .915 $>$.90; RMR = .079 closer to 0; RMSEA = .068 $<$.08).

Hypotheses Testing

We next employed the bootstrapping approach with a 2000-resampling procedure to investigate the structural model and hypothesized links. As presented in Table 3, the link between CPJ and CBR ($\beta = 0.176$, $p = 0.001$)

was positive and significant. Thus, supporting H₁. The link between CBR and HC ($\beta = 0.245, p = 0.001$) was positive and significant. Therefore, supporting H_{2a}. Likewise, the link between CBR and Advocacy ($\beta = 0.251, p = 0.001$) was positive and significant. Thus, supporting H_{2b}. Moreover, CBR is significantly and positively related to customer tolerance ($\beta = 0.455, p = 0.000$), and H_{2c} was supported. Besides, the link between CBR and Feedback ($\beta = 0.173, p = 0.029$). Thus, H_{2d} was supported. Results also indicated that the link between CPS and CAC ($\beta = 0.582, p = 0.001$) was positive and significant. Therefore, H₄ was supported. Likewise, the findings showed that CAC was significantly and positively linked to customer-oriented CCBs (HC and Advocacy) ($\beta = 0.354, p = 0.000; \beta = 0.510, p = 0.000$, respectively). Thus, H_{5a} and H_{5b} were supported. Finally, CAC was significantly and positively linked to firm-oriented CCBs (customer tolerance and feedback) ($\beta = 0.153, p = 0.043; \beta = 0.349, p = 0.001$, respectively). As a result, H_{5c} and H_{5d} were supported.

| H | Path | Std. β | CR | p | Results |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|------|-----------|
| H ₁ | CPJ → CBR | 0.176 | 3.289 | .001 | Supported |
| H ₂ | | | | | |
| H _{2a} | CBR → HC | 0.245 | 3.241 | .001 | Supported |
| H _{2b} | CBR → Advocacy | 0.251 | 3.868 | .001 | Supported |
| H _{2c} | CBR → Tolerance | 0.455 | 5.407 | .001 | Supported |
| H _{2d} | CBR → Feedback | 0.173 | 2.184 | .029 | Supported |
| H ₄ | CPS → CAC | 0.582 | 8.756 | .001 | Supported |
| H ₅ | | | | | |
| H _{5a} | CAC → HC | 0.354 | 4.689 | .001 | Supported |
| H _{5b} | CAC → Advocacy | 0.510 | 7.599 | .001 | Supported |
| H _{5c} | CAC → Tolerance | 0.153 | 2.024 | .043 | Supported |
| H _{5d} | CAC → Feedback | 0.349 | 4.379 | .001 | Supported |

Source: Authors' computation
 CPJ, Customer Perceived Justice; CPS, Customer Perceived Support;
 CBR, Customer-based Brand Reputation; CAC, Customer Affective Commitment;
 HC, Helping other Customers.

Table 3. Results of Direct Effects

Additionally, The findings demonstrated a significant mediating role of CBR between CPJ and dimensions of target-based CCBs: HC (H_{3a}: $\beta = 0.031, p = 0.066$), advocacy (H_{3b}: $\beta = 0.048, p = 0.027$), customer tolerance (H_{3c}: $\beta = 0.074, p = 0.005$), and feedback (H_{3d}: $\beta = 0.026, p = 0.117$). Thus, H_{3b} and H_{3c} were supported. In contrast, H_{3a} and H_{3d} were rejected. Moreover, the analysis found a significant mediating impact of CAC

between CPS and dimensions of target-based CCBs: HC (H_{6a} : $\beta = 0.162$, $p = 0.002$), advocacy (H_{6b} : $\beta = 0.352$, $p = 0.001$), customer tolerance (H_{6c} : $\beta = 0.090$, $p = 0.170$), and feedback (H_{6d} : $\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.001$). As a result, H_{6a} , H_{6b} , and H_{6d} were supported. In contrast, H_{6c} was rejected. Finally, the analysis further revealed that CPS significantly mediated the linkage between CPJ and CBR (H_7 : $\beta = 0.162$, $p = 0.004$). Consequently, supporting H_7 . The mediation analysis findings are summarized in Table 4.

| H | Paths | Estimate | 95% CI | | p | Results |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------|--------|-------|-------|---------------|
| | | | Lower | Upper | | |
| H _{3a} | CPJ -> CBR -> HC | 0.031 | -0.001 | 0.101 | 0.066 | Not supported |
| H _{3b} | CPJ-> CBR -> Advocacy | 0.048 | 0.003 | 0.130 | 0.027 | Supported |
| H _{3c} | CPJ -> CBR -> Tolerance | 0.074 | 0.023 | 0.152 | 0.005 | Supported |
| H _{3d} | CPJ -> CBR -> Feedback | 0.026 | -0.007 | 0.090 | 0.117 | Not supported |
| H₆ | | | | | | |
| H _{6a} | CPS -> CAC -> HC | 0.162 | 0.059 | 0.323 | 0.002 | Supported |
| H _{6b} | CPS-> CAC -> Advocacy | 0.352 | 0.215 | 0.584 | 0.001 | Supported |
| H _{6c} | CPS -> CAC -> Tolerance | 0.090 | -0.039 | 0.257 | 0.170 | Not supported |
| H _{6d} | CPS -> CAC -> Feedback | 0.187 | 0.070 | 0.369 | 0.001 | Supported |
| H ₇ | CPJ-> CPS-> CBR | 0.162 | 0.053 | 0.309 | 0.004 | Supported |

Source: Authors' computation

CPJ, Customer Perceived Justice; CPS, Customer Perceived Support; CBR, Customer-based Brand Reputation; CAC, Customer Affective Commitment; HC, Helping other Customers; CI = Confidence Intervals. Source:

Table 4. Results of Mediation Analysis

DISCUSSION

The present outcomes confirm that perceived procedural justice has a positive impact on CBR. Our findings align with those of Bustaman *et al.* (2020), Skarlicki and Kulik (2004), and Ziaullah *et al.* (2017), who highlight the impact of perceived fairness on brand reputation. In contrast, Cintamür's (2023) paper finds no effect of procedural justice on CBR. Consequently, our current results illustrate that service customers' perceptions of the fairness of service delivery processes influence their attitudes toward the firm providing the smartphone after-sales service (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

Hypotheses H_{2a-d} argue that CBR has a positive impact on each dimension of target-based CCBs ((a) HC, (b) advocacy, (c) customer tolerance, and (d) feedback). These findings are consistent with the theory of social identity (Tajfel *et al.*, 1979) and earlier studies by Bartikowski and Walsh (2011), Cintamür (2023), and De

Nicola *et al.* (2023). The current findings imply that when customers have a positive assessment of a brand's reputation, they will advocate for that brand, be patient in the face of service failures, offer feedback to both the company and its employees to enhance its quality of service, and help new customers (Cintamür, 2023). Furthermore, the findings reveal that CBR has the lowest impact on feedback (H_{2d}), which demonstrates that even if customers have positive assessments of the firm's reputation, they may be hesitant to provide it with feedback.

One major motivation for the present investigation is to examine the mediating mechanism of CBR between perceived procedural fairness and dimensions of target-based CCBs (H_{3a-d}). The results confirm that CBR mediates the relationship between perceived procedural fairness and two dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., advocacy and customer tolerance) (H_{3b-c}). This result reveals that when customers believe that their company offers fair policies and procedures while providing strong after-sales service, they seek to help the company in return. Hence, they assess the firm's brand as a reputable one due to the reciprocity norm (Ali *et al.*, 2022; Hossin *et al.*, 2021), thereby promoting citizenship behaviors in the form of advocating for their firm's brand or increasing their tolerance for in-service failures. On the other hand, the current findings demonstrate no mediating influence of CBR in the relationship between CPJ and two dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., HC and feedback) (H_{3a} and H_{3d}). That result is consistent with Cintamür (2023), who finds no mediating influence of CBR in the relationship between perceived procedural justice and target-based CCBs. Therefore, the outcomes of this assumption contributed to responding to the first study question.

With reference to the social exchange theory, our results prove that CPS positively impacts CAC (H4), thus supporting Bettencourt (1997), Choi and Lotz (2018) and Liao *et al.* (2022). This finding confirms that when customers truly believe that their company supports them by meeting their demands for respect, gratitude, and affiliation, their affective commitment to it increases.

The results additionally exhibit that CAC has a positive influence on CCBs (H₅), which is aligned with both the social exchange theory (Choi *et al.*, 2014) and prior studies (e.g., Ahmadi and Ataei, 2022; Bartikowski

and Walsh, 2011; Chelminski and Coulter, 2011). This vital finding highlights that customers who have an affective commitment to a firm are more likely to participate in citizenship behaviors.

Another crucial contribution of the current investigation is that it determines whether the CAC serves as a bridge between CPS and target-based CCBs (H_{6a-d}). The present results illustrate that CAC mediates the links between CPS and three dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., HC, advocacy, and feedback) (H_{6a} , H_{6b} , and H_{6d}). These findings are in line with those of earlier research (Choi and Lotz, 2018) and the SOR theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In keeping with this theory, CPS stimulates CAC, thus boosting the corresponding behaviors exhibited by target-based CCBs. This result confirms that consumers who obtain support from an organization achieve high levels of affective commitment, which in turn motivates them to participate in citizenship behaviors. Contrary to predictions, the current research finds no mediating impact of CAC in the relationship between CPS and customer tolerance (H_{6c}). Consequently, the outcomes of this hypothesis further contributed to answering the second question.

Finally, one of the present study's major findings is that CPS mediates the relationship between CPJ and CBR (H_7). As expected, the results show that CPS plays an important mediating role in the CPJ–CBR relationship. This implies that customers who receive appropriate procedural fairness from their organization generate higher CPS levels (Choi and Lotz, 2018), which is in line with OST (Molinillo *et al.*, 2020) and stimulates them to make every effort to benefit the company that supports them. In alignment with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this leads them to become more proactive and enthusiastic, thus enhancing their firm's reputation (Cintamür, 2023; Hossin *et al.*, 2021). This result answers our third research question.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we examine the effects of perceived procedural fairness and customer support on customer citizenship behaviors (i.e., HC, advocacy, tolerance, and feedback) through the mediating mechanisms of CBR and CAC. Consistent with theories of social exchange and social identity, it reveals that CPJ has a significant

impact on two dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., advocacy and tolerance) through CBR. Additionally, consistent with the SOR framework and the theories of organizational climate and organizational support, the outcomes further demonstrate that CAC mediates the relationship between CPS and the three dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., HC, advocacy, and feedback). Finally, the findings also reveal that CPS mediates the relationship between perceived procedural justice and CBR.

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

The current investigation contributes to the after-sales service literature in the following four ways:

First, this paper draws attention to the crucial mediating role of CBR in clarifying how perceived procedural fairness boosts customer citizenship behaviors in the after-sales service industry, which enriches the current knowledge of customer citizenship behavior. Moreover, it boosts the research domains of perceived procedural justice and brand reputation.

Second, the proposed conceptual framework is evaluated through the lens of the S-O-R theory to shed light on the vital role of CAC as a bridge between CPS and dimensions of target-based CCBs, thus presenting a novel perspective comprehending how target-based CCBs are shaped in the context of the after-sales service industry.

Third, the present paper extends earlier studies on CPJ and its linked outcomes (i.e., CBR and target-based CCBs) by examining the important mechanisms of CBR through the social exchange and social identity theories, thereby contributing to the corpus of literature by combining these theories with CPJ to demonstrate how it enhances CBR and the dimensions of target-based CCBs.

Last, the current investigation combines three different theories (i.e., theories of organizational support and organizational climate as well as the SOR model) to examine the mediating role of CAC in the CPS–CCBs relationship. In doing so, it extends the literature on after-sales service.

Managerial Implications

This research has several managerial implications. Managers of smartphone after-sales service providers should be aware that CPJ has an important positive influence on CBR and CCBs. Likewise, CPS has a crucial impact on CAC and CCBs.

First, perceived procedural justice is vital for CBR and CCBs. Therefore, the managers of after-sales service providers should be able to clearly explain and define service delivery procedures and policies. Doing so will make the process easier and more convenient for smartphone users. Maintaining clear policies and procedures related to after-sales services can significantly boost both brand reputation and customer citizenship behaviors.

Second, the current paper reveals that CAC is a consequence of CPS. Hence, in the smartphone after-sales service sector, it is essential to fully understand CAC, since it is a vital intermediary in translating CPS into customer citizenship behaviors. Thus, this research enriches managers' awareness of customer affective commitment in the smartphone after-sales service industry to boost customers' citizenship behaviors.

Finally, based on our empirical findings, we conclude that the CPJ–CCBs relationship can be further strengthened by CBR. Thus, after-sales service managers should pay close attention to supporting their customers to enhance their affective commitment and elicit voluntary behaviors toward the organization.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although this paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge on smartphone after-sales service and opens up new avenues for research, it has several limitations that restrict the generalizability of its results.

First, this investigation was executed using the online survey method. Future studies should involve customer interviews to identify other mediating mechanisms that may further explain how CPJ and CPS enhance customers' citizenship behavior.

Second, the sample was gathered exclusively in Egypt. Future research can replicate the present framework using multiple samples from other countries to investigate whether consumers' citizenship behaviors differ by culture.

Third, the present investigation shows no mediating influence of CBR in the relationship between perceived procedural justice and two dimensions of target-based CCBs (i.e., HC and feedback). Thus, scholars should examine the cultural orientations of collectivism and individualism as moderators in the relationships between perceived procedural justice, CBR, HC, and feedback since such orientations have a vital effect on customers' motivation to participate in citizenship behaviors (Emeka *et al.*, 2020).

Fourth, since our investigation were only focused on the mediating role of overall CBR between CPJ and target-based CCBs, researchers can examine the influence of the dimensions of CBR (i.e., social and environmental responsibility, customer orientation, service quality, and reliability) (Maria *et al.*, 2017) as mediating mechanisms in the CPJ–CCBs relationship.

Finally, scholars may need to consider additional variables as well as whether other consequences, determinants, or factors (e.g., customer trust and level of education) moderate the relationships among CPJ, CPS, CBR, CAC, and CCBs.

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| Construct | Items | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>FL</i> | <i>α</i> | CR | AVE |
|------------------|-------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------|------|
| CPJ | Q1 | 3.66 | .865 | .786 | .889 | .892 | .735 |
| | Q2 | 3.67 | .856 | .874 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.71 | .851 | .907 | | | |
| CPS | Q1 | 3.42 | .822 | .750 | .869 | .874 | .699 |
| | Q2 | 3.31 | .839 | .910 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.41 | .846 | .840 | | | |
| CBR | Q1 | 3.37 | 1.006 | .759 | .801 | .807 | .582 |
| | Q2 | 3.86 | .798 | .746 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.71 | .854 | .784 | | | |
| CAC | Q1 | 3.56 | 1.043 | .753 | .90 | .895 | .630 |
| | Q2 | 3.31 | 1.058 | .770 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.27 | 1.119 | .795 | | | |
| | Q4 | 3.12 | 1.104 | .860 | | | |
| | Q5 | 2.97 | 1.115 | .785 | | | |
| HC | Q1 | 3.60 | .743 | .731 | .873 | .860 | .606 |
| | Q2 | 3.58 | .764 | .756 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.74 | .831 | .865 | | | |
| | Q4 | 3.64 | .868 | .756 | | | |
| Advocacy | Q1 | 3.62 | .964 | .884 | .913 | .917 | .786 |
| | Q2 | 3.76 | .929 | .927 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.84 | .857 | .847 | | | |
| Tolerance | Q1 | 3.10 | .904 | .787 | .751 | .761 | .517 |
| | Q2 | 3.35 | .837 | .734 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.16 | .905 | .628 | | | |
| Feedback | Q1 | 3.33 | .843 | .779 | .793 | .794 | .563 |
| | Q2 | 3.65 | .738 | .707 | | | |
| | Q3 | 3.45 | .807 | .763 | | | |

Source: Authors' computation
 CPJ: Customer Perceived Justice; CPS: Customer Perceived Support; CBR: Customer-based Brand Reputation; CAC: Customer Affective Commitment; HC: Helping other Customers; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; FL: Factor Loadings; *α*: Cronbach's alpha; CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, Reliability, and Validity Analysis

| Variable | Type | <i>n</i> | % |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Gender | Male | 156 | 54.93 |
| | Female | 128 | 45.07 |
| | Total | 284 | 100 |
| Age | Under 20 | 15 | 5.28 |
| | 20-30 | 171 | 60.21 |
| | 31-40 | 44 | 15.49 |
| | 41-50 | 37 | 13.03 |
| | Above 50 | 17 | 5.98 |
| | Total | 284 | 100 |
| Education | High School | 6 | 2.11 |
| | Bachelor | 205 | 72.18 |
| | Master and Higher | 73 | 25.70 |
| | Total | 284 | 100 |
| Brand | Samsung | 141 | 49.65 |
| | HUAWEI | 54 | 19.01 |
| | Infinix | 40 | 14.08 |
| | Xiaomi | 21 | 7.39 |
| | iPhone | 20 | 7.04 |
| | Others | 8 | 2.81 |
| | Total | 284 | 100 |

Source: Authors' computation

Table 2. Demographic Information