

Analysis of the Effect of Cynicism and Empathy on Reciprocity and Reciprocity on Gratitude in Service Company

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Abstract-The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of cynicism and empathy on reciprocity and reciprocity toward consumer gratitude in the service company. Primary data were collected through survey online with questionnaire from 203 respondents in Bengkulu Indonesia. The data was further using SEM with AMOS tool to examines effects between independent and dependent variables. Data analysis is used confirmatory factor analysis, assessment of normality, and regression weights. The results indicate that cynicism has negative effect on gratitude, cynicism and empathy have positive effects on reciprocity respectively, empathy has positive effects on reciprocity and also reciprocity has positive effects on gratitude.

Keywords: cynicism, empathy, gratitude, reciprocity

I. INTRODUCTION

A good relationship between the company and consumers is very important to maintain the company's existence. Meanwhile management is more interested in short term profits than long term sustainability [6]. Thus, Palmatier et al. [36] in his research highlighted efforts to enhance interpersonal relationships in order to build, develop and maintain successful long-term relationships with consumers. Thus, Long-term relationships between companies and customers can be driven by gratitude [14]. Further, Wood et al. [44] states that almost all the literature of gratitude has been developed. Gratitude note that a voluntary response that arises from recognition for the benefits provided by the company [10]. Literature from organizational psychology highlight cynicism in which the most common enduring negative trait that adversely affect the cultivation of positive emotions such as gratitude [13]. According Inesi et al. [27] said that people who have a high level of cynicism may believe that other people will not return the benefits that have

been given in the future, then he feels reluctant to engage in reciprocity. In principle, Reciprocity is based on returning aid for benefits received from individuals [35] in which is an important element of the relationship between company with consumers. Then, to maintain reciprocity at a higher level they must show empathy [20]. Cynicism is also seen as a form of resistance from individuals in their capacity to change the market. Cynicism is often seen when consumers feel angry and less satisfied with the company so doing rebellion [25].

For a long time, research about cynicism has increased in Western societies both in general and in business, in particular increasingly having an impact on consumer decision making and their emotional responses to company offers [31]. Consumers who feel cynical about a company may not complain but turn to alternative companies [5]. Moreover, Inesi et al. [27] state that people who have high levels of cynicism may believe that other people will not return the benefits that have been given in the future, so they are reluctant to enter into reciprocity. In linking the reciprocity as someone feels obliged to repay the kindness given to those who produce feelings of pleasure, while failing will lead to guilt [11].

Consumer empathy is the ability of consumers to accept employee perspectives and react according to the thoughts and feelings desired by employees. Over the past 20 years service organizations have recognized that frontline employees are very influential in consumer experience [43] and this is seen from the influence great on the perspective of consumers, feelings of affection, motivation for protection, perception, and evaluation at service meetings [4].

Empathy can act as a qualification of social interaction that encourages harmony of people's feelings and thoughts and produce smooth and

harmonious interactions [23]. Customers who feel the situation that caused the failure are more likely to react to an unsatisfactory event in a better way of delivering it.

Meanwhile, the previous study only focused on the economic impact of investment in marketing relations on consumer gratitude, and in his research was the first to highlight psychological mechanisms (cynicism and reciprocity) as mechanisms additional to stimulate or inhibit gratitude [14]. Following the research about cynicism has a negative influence on relational conflict as a result of low expectations of cynicism success in a relationship. These findings imply that those who have a high level of cynicism will experience interpersonal difficulties, problems of trust, and rigidity in carrying out social activities that can reduce or prevent gratitude [40].

Previous research is still being done on many services by developing marketing relationships that are influenced by customer satisfaction. Furthermore, there are many other previous studies focusing on the impact of economic investments in relationship marketing on consumer gratitude. In this study more emphasis on highlighting the psychological mechanism (the norm of reciprocity and customer cynicism) as an additional explanatory mechanism to find out its effects of consumer gratitude. While earlier work have identified the positive effect reciprocity toward gratitude [15] and cynicism has effect on reciprocity [20].

Meanwhile, the effect reciprocity on customer gratitude with the service sometimes becomes overlooked. These gap has been cited as one of the key factors limiting knowledge about how gratitude can affect marketing strategies [10]. However, there are experts' opinions, people's perceptions of the word service itself vary from personal service to service as a product. Services have several properties and categories, one of which is pure service, which offers only services. One example of pure service is shipping services. In this study researchers only used one specific service as an object of research with the aim to determine the effect of cynicism, empathy, and reciprocity on customer gratitude. Service is an activity, benefit, or satisfaction offered for sale which is basically intangible and does not result in any ownership [29]. However, there are experts' opinions, people's perceptions of the word service itself vary from personal service to service as a product. Services have several properties and categories, one of which is pure service, which offers only services. One example of pure service is shipping services.

Moreover, In this study has taken the delivery service company in which one of the main factors this research has chosen is J&T Express because the company won the prestigious Top Brand Award in 2018 in the courier service category. The award given by the marketing magazine is based on the

results of a Frountier Cosmetics Group survey. J&T Express won the Top Brand Award, in addition to getting the Top Brand Award in 2018, J&T Express also received complaints from people who used their company's services. Even though, J&T Express received the Top Brand Award, in fact this company has received complaints from people who use their company's services. Complaints made by the public is that the goods that have been sent do not arrive in accordance with the specified time before sending. This complaint has been conveyed to the J&T Express to which the goods are sent and did not get a solution. In addition, J&T Express made an excuse regarding the delivery destination that the photos and receipt numbers were unclear. Another reason used by J&T Express is that shipping has overloaded, causing delays in goods reaching consumers

This research specifically focusses on analyzing the effect of cynicism, empathy, and reciprocity on customer gratitude. First of all, in the literature review part, cynicism, empathy, and reciprocity on customer gratitude is explained.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Gratitude

Gratitude is defined as a positive emotion that is felt by someone when someone else has intentionally provided or tried to give something of value or benefit [33]. For decades in psychology gratitude has been largely ignored [32]. This has been surprising given the general experience experienced has a broad appeal among the people who are desirable emotions across cultures and religions. Recent research in psychology shows that gratitude has several positive effects, such as fostering prosocial behavior, maintaining existing close relationships [2].

B. Cynicism

Cynicism as a negative attitude that can be broad and specific in its focus and has a cognitive, affective, and behavioral component [42]. Therefore, Cynism is defined as an attitude of disbelief in the sincerity of others' motives and actions [8]. Cynicism has also combined feelings of customer manipulation and ethics as well as exploiting others for self-interest [7]. The main concept of cynicism is to pretend to be unselfish to reduce selfish goals [25].

C. Reciprocity

Reciprocity can be interpreted as a desire to behave well or try to respond to an action taken by someone else or it can be interpreted as a response to an evolutionary driven rational behavior [18]. One of the first definitions of reciprocity was obtained from the theory of social exchange [21]. which states that the reciprocity norm stipulates that individuals must help individuals who help themselves and must reciprocate against those who

hurt them [19] and Sigmund [39] said that broadly identifies reciprocity directly and indirectly.

D. Empathy

Empathy as a feeling that causes increased concern for the welfare of others, so that someone tends to have positive attitude in themselves [26] found that the term empathy effect is forgiveness which refers to the fact empathy will be able to reduce unsatisfactory experiences in social interactions.

E. Hypothesis & Related Concept

Cynicism on gratitude

Cynicism as develops distrust of organizational motives, policies or marketing claims [22]. Highlighting the negative relationships of organizations and consumers stated that Fournier & Alvarez [17] make use of Emotional assessment theory [38] which states that consumers' perceptions of negative experiences caused by themselves stimulate negative emotional responses such as guilt or remorse, while negative experiences caused by others tend to lead to emotional responses such as anger, regret, or a lasting response such as cynicism. This will reduce one's acknowledgment of the giver's goodness in which in turn hinders. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formed

H1: Cynicism has negative effects on gratitude

Cynicism on Reciprocity

Cynicism refers to the assumption of deep suspicion about the motives of others for something. Cynics assume that others are motivated by greed and will take advantage of them if given the opportunity [1]. found that cynicism was positively correlated with measures of machiavellianism and alienation [28]. Reciprocity is a personality trait that shows how much an individual's desire to be involved in it, while cynicism can show a high tendency for reciprocity due to desire personally [20]. Based on these arguments, the hypothesis used is as follows:

H2: cynicism has positive effects on reciprocity

Empathy on reciprocity

According to experts [30] state that those who experience difficulties are a source of profit because helping them when they are in need can produce reciprocity in the future [12] states that empathy can well provide the main motivation that makes reciprocity between one person and others who have been given benefits in the past and to be will continue in the future. Then, It can be hypothesized that:

H3: empathy has positive effects on reciprocity

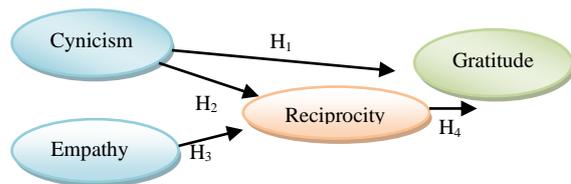
Reciprocity on Gratitude

Reciprocity is a direct prosocial response to the kindness of others who are likely to help create social bonds. People who feel grateful for getting help from others will cause feelings of wanting to provide assistance back (upstream indirect reciprocity) so as to create good new relationships. Likewise, people who already have a good reputation for helping others (downstream indirect reciprocity) are more likely to be assisted by others [34]. For this reason, the hypothesis used is as follows:

H4: Reciprocity has positive effects on gratitude

Based on previous theoretical studies that the theoretical model is given in figure 1. This research have shown that the relationship between cynicism and empathy with reciprocity [20]. Likewise, another study is revealed that cynicism also has an influence on gratitude [17]. In this study related to cynicism and empathy which can be considered as variables that will affect reciprocity which can have implications on gratitude.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model for the Effect of Cynicism and Empathy on Reciprocity and Reciprocity on Gratitude



Source: (Fazal E. Hasan et al., 2017); (Gilliam & Rayburn, 2016)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a quantitative approach by using descriptive study. The variables used in this research are as follows: the independent variable, which consists of cynicism and empathy. The dependent variable, namely reciprocity and gratitude. The population in this study are users of J&T Express services in Bengkulu City. The sampling technique used is a technique convenience sampling. The sample in this study were aged respondents 17-40 years old. The data used are primary data obtained from distributing questionnaires online to users of J&T Express services. Data analyses used was inferential statistics analysis. The one used in this research was Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS 23. Testing research instruments using two methods, namely test validity and reliability test. Validity test consists of convergent validity and discriminant validity test. The study uses covergen validity in AMOS with reflective indicators is assessed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) as indicators that measure the construct. CFA value ≥ 0.5 indicate that it complies with the minimum level, where as a CFA value in this study

are above 0.5 is considered significant [20]. In the line with the rule of thumb used by Hair et al. [26] for convergent validity is Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of > 0.5.

The purpose was to read acceptable level of each construct measurement model. SEM was chosen in order to validate the causal relationship among variable in the research model and also we used to causal relationship hypothesized.

The all indicator of factor loading are presented in table 1. For the reason, in the initial analysis the results suggested that twelve item indicators of four variables.

The results of factor loading in table 1 shows that cynicism which has been measured with three indicators: First, someone feels the company is providing poor service. Secondly, someone feels the company is willing to provide services when they benefit. Third, someone feels that the company is less concerned about the satisfaction of the service they feel. It's mean that cynicism has been supported. Then, Reciprocity is measured by three indicators consisting of: First, someone shows concern for the company, so the company provides more services in return. Second, a person and company have a good reciprocal relationship when making a transaction. Third, a person feels that between themselves and the company they benefit from the transaction. Empathy is also measured by three indicators, First, someone imagines how things are going from the company side. Secondly, someone feels worried about the conditions experienced by the company. Third, someone feels sad when the company is having problems gratitude. Further, gratitude can be measured by several indicators. First, someone feels grateful for the responsibilities given by the company.

A. Contribution Of The Study

This study contributes to service marketing literature by examined cynicism and empathy on consumer gratitude in the service company. However, this research has been different from the city and also studied separately. In developing and testing the theoretical model consumer gratitude has given consideration that the important in terms of taking attention to the impact unique behavior of the specific respondents. These important finding should encourage service company to develop and cultivate an environment services. In this case, The company needs to handle the cynicism felt by consumers through the improvement of the service system, provide a quick response from every consumer complaint and also provide solutions when consumers give complaints to the company.

Secondly, someone feels very grateful to the company. Third, someone appreciates the effort done by the company. As can be seen in table 1 that

these finding support were above the recommend cut off i.e. 0.5.

Table 1. The Summary of *Factor Loading*

Indikator – Variabel			Factor Loading
CN1	<---	CN	0,832
CN2	<---	CN	0,609
CN3	<---	CN	0,630
RY1	<---	RY	0,602
RY2	<---	RY	0,695
RY3	<---	RY	0,702
GR1	<---	GR	0,940
GR2	<---	GR	0,889
GR3	<---	GR	0,536
EP1	<---	EP	0,609
EP2	<---	EP	0,774
EP3	<---	EP	0,721

Source: The data was processed (2019)

Moreover, in table 2. The reliability test in used Cronbach's alpha or construct validity, where as Cynism at 0.735 , empathy at 0.747, reciprocity at 0.705 and gratitude at 0.843. The reliability analysis have seen that values each of the variables in this study are above 0.7. It could be concluded that the instrument used in this study is reliable.

Table 2. Summary of Cronbach's Alpha

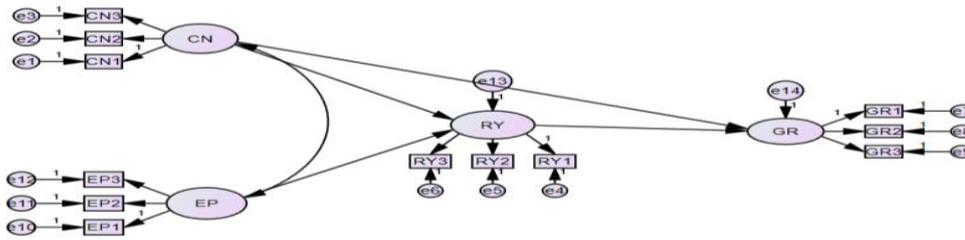
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha/ Construct Reliability
Cynicism	0.735
Empathy	0.747
Reciprocity	0.705
Gratitude	0.843

Source: The data was processed (2019)

In this case, the companies must be able to manage consumer empathy such as providing good service, building consumer confidence and if consumer gratitude is managed properly. Then to get high reciprocity they also have to show empathy through good interaction.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion is focused on four test of the hypotheses put forward by the objective of this study, which have been tested through validity and reliability test. Furthermore, in this study hypothesis testing was done through SEM, which was operated through AMOS. The results of data processing for AMOS have shown that in figure 2.



Source: The data was processed (2019)
Figure 2. Summary figure of SEM output

Hypothesis Testing

The significance of the estimated parameters provides very useful information about the relationship between the research variables. In AMOS, hypothesis testing is done by looking at the value of regression weight (Hair *et al.*, 2006).^[26] The results of hypothesis testing using regression weight values from AMOS analysis can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Regression Weight

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
GR	<---	CN	-0.617	.0100	-6.160	***
RY	<---	CN	0.438	0.131	3.347	***
RY	<---	EP	0.639	0.165	3.875	***
GR	<---	RY	0.342	0.116	2.953	.003

Source: The data was processed (2019)

The effect of cynicism on consumer gratitude

Hypothesis 1: Cynicism has a negative effects on consumer gratitude. The results obtained by Critical Ratio value of -6.160 and probability value of 0.000 < 0.05 indicating the hypthotesis 1 is accepted. The results of this study support the results of previous studies conducted by (Fazal E. Hasan *et al.*, 2017).^[15] As also (Solom *et al.*, 2017)^[41] and (Bell, 2016)^[3] stated the results of gratitude inhibiting factors and his research stated that there are two traits that can inhibit gratitude after measurement. The two characteristics are cynicism and narcissism which will reduce the increase in gratitude felt by consumers. (Solom *et al.*, 2017)^[41] In their study used two prospective designs with separate time. Based on thisthey conclude that narcissism, cynicism, and materialism inhibit gratitude to consumers. In addition, narcissism and cynicism can be considered to be the basis of gratitude. Moreover, (Foreh & Grier, 2003)^[16] recommend that to create consumer gratitude is to reduce the level of cynicism felt by them. This can be done by creating alignment of goals, relevance, consumer values, comfort, and service recovery (Foreh & Grier, 2003).^[16] These steps should not only be based on offering financial incentives that might only encourage ongoing commitment for consumers assuming these costs benefit them. However, by building relationships based on positive consumer

perceptions about service recovery and after-sales support are the two most influential factors that can reduce cynicism to consumers (Fazal E. Hasan *et al.*, 2017).^[15] Based on the results of research respondents 'responses to cynicism are in the low category and respondents' responses to gratitude are in the high category. This means that the lower the level of cynicism, the higher the level of gratitude perceived by consumers. given to consumers. One way is companies must ensure that every item that will be sent using their services is in good condition when it reaches the consumer. In order for the goods to arrive in the hands of consumers in good condition, the company must carry out special packaging in accordance with the contents of the package and also include insurance on the goods that have been sent.

The effect of cynicism on reciprocity

Hypothesis 2: cynicism has positive effects on reciprocity. The result of study obtained the Critical Ratio value of 3.347 probability value of 0.000 < 0.05 and with the result that hypothesis 2 is accepted. The finding supports the previous study that the positive influence between cynicism on reciprocity (Gilliam & Rayburn, 2016).^[20] The conceptualize reciprocity into two sides, the positive side of returning benefits properly and the negative side of replying with bad actions. Positive reciprocity based on empirical findings also has two sides namely, emotional side or affective motivation and more calculative intention.

The effect of empathy on reciprocity

Hypothesis 3: empathy has positive effects on reciprocity. The result of the data processing has shown that Critical Ratio value of 3.875 with probability value 0.000 < 0.05 and this hypothesis 3 is accepted. There was higher empathy levels complement behavior that adheres to reciprocity by directing the subject to move from balance reciprocity towards conditional reciprocity. (Pelligra, 2011)^[37]

The effect of reciprocity on gratitude

Hypothesis 4: Reciprocity has positive effects on consumer gratitude

Hypothesis 4 has also obtained a Critical Ratio value of 2.953 with probability value $0.003 < 0.05$. It can be said that H4 is accepted. The finding supports the several studies in prior which claim that reciprocity is a prosocial behavior promoted by gratitude. In their studies they measure gratitude after obtaining assistance, whether it is in a relationship that receives assistance or reciprocity (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006).^[2] These findings indicate that service companies might encourage consumers to believe in the nature of reciprocity and encourage service staff to also reciprocate, strengthen, and expand reciprocity in the company. In the end this will produce benefits for the company because consumers often return the favor far more than the benefits they receive from the company (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Stanley *et al.*, 2005)).^[9]

Table 4 demonstrates that the structural model was evaluated by fit indices which suggested that can be displayed good model fit data set with the test using AMOS.

Table 4. Summary of Default Model

<i>Model</i>	<i>Default Model</i>
RMSEA	0.036
GFI	0.953
AGFI	0.925
CMIN/DF	1.264
TLI	0.978
CFI	0.984

Source: The data was processed (2019)

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The model in this study was accepted because the results of the default model for The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) showed a number at 0.036, which means below at 0.08 then Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) with a number of 0.953 and the Adjust Goodness of Fit Model (AGFI) with a value of 0.925 indicating a recommended value or better fit. The model and data in this study also indicate acceptable fit with CMIN/DF at 1.264. TLI (Tucker Lewis Index) and CFI (Comparative Fit Index) are in the recommended range of values, namely TLI with a value of 0.978 and CFI with a value of 0.984 which means the research model accepted because it has shown the value of very good fit.

V. CONCLUSION

A survey was conducted with a sample of consumers who made users of J&T Express services in Bengkulu Indonesia. Although the data collected shows a normal distribution and randomness, the survey was conducted in one city and one service company. Further, research can overcome this limitation by talking into number other cities and other types of service company. There are many variable used to measure gratitude and can be topic for more comprehensive research in the future.

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