

Frontline Employee Service Recovery Performance in Aviation Sector: The roles of Transformational Leadership, Workplace Spirituality, and Resilience

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ABSTRACT

Detection of service failures is prevalent in various service sectors, including the aviation industry. Given the crucial role of frontline employees in addressing customer complaints, this study seeks to investigate the effective engagement of frontline employees in service recovery performance and the factors influencing it. The study gathered data from 371 employees in the aviation sector. The findings indicated a positive correlation between transformational leadership and service recovery performance. Additionally, employee resilience was identified as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and service recovery performance. However, no evidence was found to support the notion that workplace spirituality acts as a mediator in this relationship. The paper concludes with discussions on both theoretical and practical implications of the study's results.

KEYWORDS: Transformational leadership, workplace spirituality, employee's resilience, aviation, Vietnam.

1 Introduction

According to Harun and Rokonuzzaman (Harun, 2021), preventing service failures entirely in the service industry poses a significant challenge. The response of a service provider following a service failure has the potential to either enhance customer loyalty or drive them towards a competitor (Ma, 2020). Based on the findings of Harun (2021), the acquisition of a new customer is estimated to incur a cost that is approximately six to seven times higher compared to the expenses associated with retaining an existing customer.

Furthermore, as a result of rapid technological progress, customers now can express their discontent on social media platforms, leading to significant harm to a company's standing and image. Therefore, the implementation of a robust recovery strategy is of utmost importance for service-oriented organizations. Despite extensive research conducted in the domain of service recovery, numerous aspects remain ambiguous and necessitate further investigation (Harun, 2021). In a service sector characterized by intense competition, it is imperative to implement service recovery strategies effectively to rectify service failures and enhance service delivery under diverse circumstances, while ensuring minimal disruption to the service or its delivery process (Amoako, 2021). It is worth mentioning that frontline employees (FLEs) play a crucial role as the primary agents responsible for implementing service delivery, making them essential in the development of effective recovery strategies (Zhang, 2020). The FLEs engage in direct

interpersonal interactions with customers, either through face-to-face communication or voice-based exchanges. Consequently, the attitudes and behaviors of individuals are closely associated with the fulfillment of dissatisfied customers (Zhang, 2020). The existing body of research on the topic of service recovery performance (SRP) and the strategies employed by frontline service employees to effectively address service failures and enhance SRP is currently limited, as noted by Karatepe and Vatankhah (Karatepe, 2015). Moreover, prior studies on SRP have primarily concentrated on human resource practices, specifically rewards, empowerment, and organizational commitment to quality. These practices have been identified as predictors for the performance of FLEs in service recovery, as highlighted by Tuan and Thao (Tuan, 2018). The empirical examination of the approach centered on resources for enhancing an employee's service recovery performance has been limited in previous studies (Silva, 2020). When FLEs implement service recovery strategies, they are confronted with the challenge of managing stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion resulting from customer complaints (Zhang, 2020), particularly when dealing with aggressive customers. In such circumstances, these FLEs must possess sufficient resources. The origins of resources can be attributed to various factors, including the contextual environment, leadership influences, and individual's resources. Prior research has established that leaders possess a pivotal role in the context of SRP (Tuan, 2018). Luo (2019) have posited a potential association between an employee's service recovery

performance and transformational leadership (TFL), which falls within the category of leadership styles grounded in ethical principles. TFL, as described by (Kloutsiniotis, 2022), is distinguished by its emphasis on employee development, which results in the transformation of followers' beliefs and attitudes, leading to performance that exceeds expectations (Stock, 2022). TFL is also characterized by a process-oriented approach and a focus on meeting the higher-order intrinsic needs of followers (Kloutsiniotis, 2022). According to Kloutsiniotis (2022), positive employee outcomes related to SRP have been associated with TFL, based on the aforementioned characteristics. Nevertheless, the correlation between TFL and SRP has been inadequately established in previous research (Luo, 2019). Buil (2019) emphasized the need for additional research to examine the impact of TFL on the nature of work outcomes of FLE, specifically focusing on SRP. Furthermore, despite the extensive historical background, there remains several unexplored aspects within the realm of the transformational leadership paradigm (Siangchokyoo, 2020). Notably, there is a dearth of research concerning transformational leadership behaviors (Stock, 2022) as well as the fundamental pillars of this leadership theory, namely follower transformation (Siangchokyoo, 2020). Drawing attention to overlooked concerns and taking into account the recommendations put forth by Siangchokyoo (2020), as well as Stock (2022), the present study focuses on examining the effects of transformational leadership behaviors on SRP and an individual's capacity to confront challenges. Additionally, the research aims to elucidate the precise mechanisms through which transformational leadership transforms followers.

Moreover, recent studies on SRP have initiated investigations into the strategies employed by employees to effectively manage interactions with dissatisfied customers following a service failure, leveraging their individual resources (Costers, 2019). Costers (2019) have established a correlation between customer service orientation, cultural intelligence, and the recovery performance of FLE. Nevertheless, there is a limited understanding of the impact of individual resilience on recovery performance. Resilience, defined as a constructive response to challenging circumstances, empowers employees to effectively navigate uncertainty and stressful situations in the workplace, while also fostering the adoption of optimistic mindsets (Hartmann, 2020). In light of the fact that managing a service failure is a source of stress within the workplace, the augmentation of employee resilience has the potential to facilitate employees in adapting to such situations and effectively addressing customer complaints. Yang (2015) propose a positive association between psychological resilience and the efficacy of service recovery. However, this discovery exclusively concentrated on the level of the team. Furthermore, as posited by Hobfoll (1989) in his conservation of resources theory, resilience can be regarded as an individual resource that can be influenced by the presence of social resources within the surrounding environment. A limited number of researchers, in a

somewhat unexpected manner, emphasized this concept when documenting their study subjects and findings (Hartmann, 2020). Moreover, Silva (2020) propose that in light of the constraints surrounding the antecedent conditions of SRP, future research should integrate personal resources with job-related factors to enhance the predictive accuracy of an employee's SRP. In order to bridge these gaps, we employ the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as a framework to investigate the impact of TFL on an employee's ability to effectively recover from service failures, with a particular focus on the mediating role of the employee's resilience.

An increasing amount of empirical research indicates that the integration of spirituality within the workplace, commonly referred to as Workplace Spirituality (WP), has been found to have positive effects on employees' mental well-being and job performance (Moon, 2020). According to Duchon (2005), the concept of WP can be described as the state in which employees possess an intrinsic sense of fulfillment derived from engaging in meaningful work within a communal setting. According to the COR theory perspective, the presence of spirituality in the workplace can be regarded as a spiritual resource that has the potential to enhance employees' psychological capacities, enabling them to achieve desired outcomes in their professional endeavors (Moon, 2020). Despite the potential impact of WP on an employee's job performance, particularly in high-stress work situations, there has been limited scientific investigation into the psychological mechanisms that elucidate the reasons and processes through which spirituality in the workplace generates positive outcomes (Moon, 2020). Furthermore, the dimensions of WP can serve as a representation of fundamental human needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Moon, 2020). To enable these three essential needs, FLEs are required to be exposed to the direction of TFL. Considering it as a whole, in this study, we aim to examine mechanisms that underline the relationship between TFL and SRP through the mediating role of WP and employees' resilience by integrating COR theory and SDT theory.

2 Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1 The theoretical foundation

2.1.1 The conservation of resources (COR) theory

The Conservation of Resources theory posits that individuals place value on various resources, including material assets, energy (such as time, money, effort, and insurance coverage), conditions (such as status and work roles), and personal resources (such as traits, skills, ability, and knowledge) (Hobfoll, 1989). The theory is based on the concept of developing a framework that enables individuals to prevent resource depletion, preserve current resources, and acquire the necessary resources to engage in appropriate behavior. Moreover, the COR theory posits that resources play a pivotal role in determining individuals' perceptions of stress-inducing events and their ability to effectively manage such challenging circumstances (Buchwald, 2010). The present study aims to investigate the role of COR theory in understanding the process

of handling service failures as a stressful work event. Specifically, this study will explore how resources from TFL are utilized as contextual resources to effectively assist FLEs in resolving service failures. Moreover, individuals are inclined to utilize their own resources, such as resilience and work-related psychological safety, to enhance their service recovery performance when they perceive access to contextual resources.

2.1.2 The Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

The theory of Self-Determination (SDT), which was established by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985, has emerged as a widely recognized framework for comprehending human motivation and behavior. SDT is a research framework that examines the influence of social environments and personal characteristics on different types of motivation, including autonomous and regulated motivation. Additionally, SDT aims to predict the impact of these motivational factors on psychological well-being, subjective experiences, and performance outcomes (Deci, 2015). According to SDT, it is posited that individuals possess three inherent psychological needs, namely competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The requirement for autonomy entails the internal validation of conduct, resulting in individuals experiencing a sense of personal responsibility for their actions (Slemp, 2021). The concept of competence encompasses both a subjective sense of effectiveness and a desire for tasks that exceed one's current abilities (Busque-Carrier, 2021). The concept of relatedness pertains to the establishment of a perceived connection between individuals and their surrounding social context (Deci, 2015). According to Deci (2015), individuals who have their needs fulfilled experience a sense of self-determination and motivation, resulting in enhanced well-being and positive job attitudes and behaviors. Based on the framework of SDT, workplace spirituality (WP) encompasses various dimensions such as inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community. It serves as a witness to and fulfills three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Srivastava, 2021). Put simply, when employees adopt a positive WP, it encourages them to engage in positive work behaviors, which subsequently enhances their performance in service recovery.

2.2 Hypotheses development

2.2.1 Transformational leadership and service recovery performance

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research that has established a correlation between transformational leadership (TFL) and various favorable outcomes for both employees and organizations (Stock, 2022). The current study focuses on the SRP of FLE. SRP refers to the comprehensive organizational initiatives aimed at addressing service failures, with a specific focus on the capabilities and actions of frontline employees. The objective of SRP is to effectively resolve service failures, leading to the retention of dissatisfied customers and their subsequent transformation into satisfied customers (Silva, 2020). The aforementioned characteristics contribute to the recognition of SRP as a substantial organizational benefit arising from TFL. In a more precise manner, it can be stated that transformational leaders foster an environment where their followers are motivated to prioritize the objectives of the organization over their personal interests.

Additionally, they emphasize the importance of establishing and upholding high levels of performance, embracing and acting upon feedback, nurturing and advocating for innovative thinking, and giving priority to the needs of their subordinates (Buil, 2019). According to Rafferty (2004), leaders also play a role in inspiring their followers to surpass anticipated performance levels through the transformation of their attitudes, beliefs, and values. Hence, it can be argued that transformational leaders have the potential to improve the SRP of FLEs. Transformational leaders can also make it easier for FLEs to deal with service failures in new and creative ways by encouraging their followers' creativity and boosting their motivation to actively explore new ideas and different ways to solve problems. In addition, by utilizing COR theory as a theoretical framework, the implementation of transformational leadership can foster a secure and nurturing atmosphere, offering guidance, empathy, and assistance (Kloutsiniotis, 2022). In particular, exposed to the source of TFL resources, FLEs amble sufficient resources to effectively deal with customer complaints. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1. Transformational leadership is positively related to FLE's service recovery performance.

2.2.2 The mediating role of workplace spirituality

Previous research has demonstrated that the occurrence of spiritual fulfillment among employees is positively associated with their intrinsic motivation, thereby yielding advantageous outcomes such as enhanced work engagement, reduced emotional exhaustion, enhanced well-being, and increased productivity (Lata, 2022). The significance of spirituality in the workplace necessitates a prevalent practice among employees to fulfill their spiritual requirements within the work environment (Singh, 2022). Interestingly, the phenomenon of WP has been the subject of extensive research in the domains of human resource management, organizational behavior, and psychology. However, it remains a relatively nascent area of study that warrants further scholarly investigation (Singh, 2022).

According to Soliman (2021), the identification of factors that precede WP is an area of research that needs more attention. This includes exploring the potential influence of leadership style as a predictive factor. Therefore, the present study posits a positive correlation between TFL and WP. The selection of this particular leadership style was based on the prevailing consensus within the field of organizational research, which asserts that TFL is a vital managerial characteristic that fosters favorable outcomes for employees (Bureau, 2021). When looking at the idea of TFL through the lens of SDT, it's important to note that it's a key step toward meeting the three basic psychological needs of employees. These needs encompass autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are integral components of WP. The research by Niessen (2017), which found a connection between transformational leadership behaviors and the satisfaction of these fundamental needs, supports the claim.

According to Srivastava (2021), the concept of WP, with its various dimensions, serves as proof of the satisfaction of three fundamental human needs. According to the framework of STD, it is believed that the factors preceding the fulfillment of these needs contribute to the employee's internal well-being, sense of purposeful work, and sense of belonging within the

organizational environment.

According to [Lai \(2020\)](#), transformational leaders employ intellectual stimulation as a means to motivate their followers to question established norms and procedures and to actively seek their input and suggestions on enhancing productivity. Consequently, transformational leaders facilitate the empowerment of their subordinates, enabling them to effectively utilize their expertise and capabilities, engage in innovative problem-solving, develop proficiency in resolving issues, and ultimately determine the optimal course of action ([Lai, 2020](#)). These factors contribute to an employee's perception of work as meaningful. Moreover, by employing idealized influence and providing inspirational motivation, transformational leaders effectively convey a compelling shared vision that instills a sense of purpose in employees, leading them to perceive collective objectives as significant. Consequently, individuals exhibit a profound connection to the organization's values and objectives, encompassing social, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions ([Lai, 2020](#)). Therefore, the employee's internal experiences are attained. The concept of fostering a sense of community among employees is justified by the belief that transformational leaders inspire individuals to transcend their personal interests and work towards common objectives ([Khan, 2020](#)). This could potentially lead to productive and efficient collaboration among employees.

Additionally, prior studies have demonstrated the positive impact of WP on job performance, attributing this effect to the underlying mechanism of intrinsic motivation inherent in the concept of WP ([Jones, 2016](#)). The significance of SRP in an employee's job performance has been emphasized in previous research ([Paşamehmetoğlu, 2022](#)). Consequently, it is plausible to consider WP as a potential precursor to SRP. According to [Srivastava \(2021\)](#), the fulfillment of WP plays a crucial role in meeting the three fundamental psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and spirituality. As a result, employees experience an enhancement in their autonomous or intrinsic motivation. By employing SDT, the present study posits that intrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role in fostering desirable work behaviors and promoting creativity among employees ([Khan, 2020](#)). This includes the ability to effectively and creatively address service failures. Moreover, when examining the situation through the lens of COR theory, it becomes evident that a favorable sense of spirituality in the workplace serves as an individual resource that FLEs endeavor to acquire. This resource enables them to effectively and flexibly address challenging circumstances, particularly when dealing with dissatisfied customers who have encountered service failure. Indeed, this particular resource holds significant advantages for individuals employed in customer-facing roles, such as sales representatives and FLEs ([Kloutsiniotis, 2022](#)). Taken together, we consequently postulate that:

H2. Workplace spirituality meditates the positive relationship between transformational leadership and service recovery performance.

2.2.3 The mediating role of employee's resilience

Researchers have initiated investigations into the correlation between the work environments of employees and their resilience, acknowledging that an employee's resilience is a characteristic of a state-like capacity ([Hartmann, 2020](#)). In relation to this matter, there is a growing body of research that

provides insight into the ways in which work context resources contribute to the development of employees' resilience. This notion is consistent with the COR theory ([Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)), which contends that resilience is a personal resource that is susceptible to contextual factors at work. [Harland \(2005\)](#) demonstrated a positive correlation between TFL and resilience in employees by conceptualizing resilience as a protective element that supports individuals in effectively managing substantial change and adversity. This study builds upon the COR theory framework to explore the previous findings. Specifically, the current study examines how TFL, characterized by attributes such as idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, motivational inspiration, and individualized consideration, functions as a contextual resource that impacts an employee's resilience. Service recoveries encompass a multitude of alterations and choices. However, FLEs often encounter unforeseeable and intricate service failures, which can result in elevated levels of stress, depression, and emotional distress ([Yang, 2015](#)). In order to effectively address service failures and respond adaptively to stressful situations, it is imperative for FLEs to possess optimistic thinking and the ability to regulate their emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Drawing upon the COR theory, it is posited that individuals functioning as FLEs possess personal resources, such as resilience, which can potentially enhance their capacity to effectively maintain a state of calmness and optimism. According to ([Yang, 2015](#)), this practice facilitates individuals in making effective decisions at the right time, thereby enhancing their SRP. In accordance with COR theory, the integration of TFL would enhance the resilience of employees, resulting in the establishment of a "resource caravan" as described by [Djourova \(2020\)](#). This interconnected collection of resources would subsequently contribute to the service recovery performance of FLEs. Building upon the aforementioned line of reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed (Figure 1):

H3: FLE's resilience meditates the positive relationship between transformational leadership and service recovery performance.

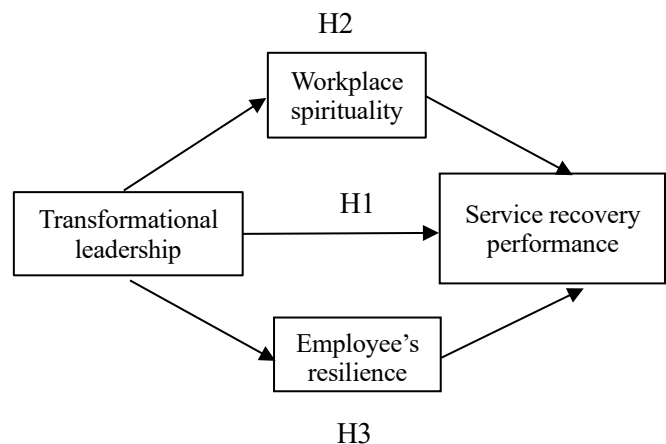


Figure 1. The proposed model

3. Methodology

3.1 Research process

The main aim of the third phase of the study is to evaluate the measurement and structural (hypothetical) models. The

research used a self-administered survey questionnaire as a data collection method for a sample of 371 individuals engaged in the aviation sector in Ho Chi Minh City. The major method used to assess the proposed model was partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), based on the data obtained. The researchers used the software program SmartPLS 3.0 for this particular objective. According to Hair (2010), the evaluation of the measurement model was based on assessing its reliability, convergence, and discriminant validity. Subsequently, we continued to analyze the structural model as well as the direct and indirect relationships. To address the possible confounding effect of common method bias, a notable concern in data collection methods that depend on self-reported measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we used a combination of procedural strategies and statistical approaches. Next, a comprehensive analysis and discourse on our empirical findings were undertaken, drawing upon the outcomes of hypothesis testing. Furthermore, this study offers theoretical insights into the expanding body of research on transformational leadership, workplace spirituality, workers' resilience, and service recovery performance. Additionally, the study offers practical recommendations for aviation managers. Furthermore, some constraints of this work that provide opportunities for further investigation were recognized.

3.2 Measurement scale

Transformational leadership scale was adapted from Carless (2000) with seven items.

The measure of workplace spirituality was obtained from Beehner and Blackwell (2016). The scale contains 21 items.

The assessment of employees' resilience was conducted through the utilization of Luthans (2007b) six-item scale.

Service recovery performance scale were adapted from Boshoff (2000), with five items.

3.3 Data collection

The research employed participants from air service providers that operate air service at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Vietnam. The entities include airlines such as Vietnam Airlines, Vietjet Air, and Bamboo Airways, as well as ground handling service businesses such as Viags and Sags and airport service providers such as ACV. By using the researcher's network with these air service providers, we contacted HR managers to get the roster of frontline staff. Subsequently, we sent an invitation to them, inviting their voluntary involvement in our study endeavor. FLEs were given a financial incentive of VND 50,000, equivalent to USD 2.5, for completing the survey. After eliminating unsuitable data, a total of 371 questionnaires were used for further analysis. Therefore, the rate of response was 94%.

3.4 Questionnaire development

The survey instrument used in the research was organized into two separate sections. The initial section of the study included items to measure transformational leadership, workplace spirituality, workers' resilience, and service recovery performance. The current study used a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the participants' responses, where a score of 5 indicated strong agreement and a score of 1 indicated strong disagreement. The subsequent section of the survey is dedicated to collecting

demographic data, which includes characteristics such as gender, age, experiences, and educational background.

The survey questionnaire was first created in the English language. The questionnaire was then translated into Vietnamese using the back-translation approach (Schaffer, 2003) due to the Vietnamese background of the study's respondents. In this methodology, two bilingual academics proficient in both English and Vietnamese were invited to translate the instrument from its original English version into Vietnamese and then retranslate it back into English.

The purpose of this double translation is to allow specialists to assess the semantic coherence of each survey question by reviewing it in both versions. According to Schaffer (2003), this methodology also guarantees that the interpretation of each question remains constant across many respondents from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In order to ensure the scale's items, fit the Vietnamese context in terms of wording, understanding, and convenience for participants, as well as to confirm the presence of content validity for each item on the measuring scale, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with three experts specializing in the fields of organizational behavior and management.

4 Results

4.1 Demographic characteristics

With regard to age distribution, a majority of 68.2% of employees were below the age of 30, while 29.1% were situated within the age range of 30 to 40. A little 2.7% included those aged beyond 40. With regards to gender, it is seen that 41.2% of the whole 371 employees were identified as male, while 58.8% were identified as female. Regarding the educational background of the participants, a majority (82.5%) had successfully obtained a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. A smaller proportion (9.7%) had a technical school degree, while 6.5% had achieved a master's degree or a higher level of study. A negligible fraction (1.3%) of the participants had just finished high school education. In relation to the workers' work experience, it is observed that a majority of 40.2% possess work experience ranging from five to ten years in the aviation business. This is closely followed by 39.4% of individuals who have worked within this sector for a period of two to five years. A smaller proportion of employees, about 17.5%, have accumulated more than ten years of experience in the aviation industry, while a mere 3.0% have fewer than two years of experience in this field.

4.2 The measurement model

Table 1. Construct reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR
TF	0.836	0.917	0.899
WB	0.960	0.970	0.963
ES	0.687	0.739	0.861
SRP	0.760	0.814	0.836

The evaluation of the measuring model in this study included an examination of the reliability, validity, and discriminant validity of the research constructs. Concerning reliability, it is important to note that both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) met the necessary levels of 0.6 and 0.7, as suggested by Hair et al. (2016). Also, Joreskog's (1971) composite reliability rho_A is a key metric used in partial least

squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and is used to measure the internal consistency reliability. Consequently, greater values in composite reliability ρ_A are indicative of higher levels of reliability. Based on the findings obtained from the data analysis, as shown in Table 4.1, it can be seen that all scales exhibit notably elevated values of ρ_A , ranging from 0.947 to 0.969. Therefore, all structures exhibit a satisfactory level of reliability.

Table 2. Factor loading & AVE

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	AVE
Transformational Leadership	TF1	0.452 ^a	0.753
	TF2	0.403 ^a	
	TF3	0.778	
	TF4	0.267 ^a	
	TF5	0.895	
	TF6	0.899	
	TF7	0.452 ^a	
	WP1	0.701	
	WP2	0.723	
	WP3	0.641	
Workplace spirituality	WP4	0.559 ^a	0.566
	WP5	0.764	
	WP6	0.734	
	WP7	0.654	
	WP8	0.739	
	WP9	0.657	
	WP10	0.805	
	WP11	0.777	
	WP12	0.761	
	WP13	0.848	
	WP14	0.844	
	WP15	0.800	
Employee's resilience	WP16	0.804	0.757
	WP17	0.735	
	WP18	0.797	
	WP19	0.763	
	WP20	0.816	
	WP21	0.757	
Service recovery performance	ER1	0.167 ^a	0.561
	ER2	0.404 ^a	
	ER3	0.565 ^a	
	ER4	0.657	
	ER5	0.617	
	ER6	0.783	
	SRP1	0.799	
	SRP2	0.799	
	SRP3	0.717	
	SRP4	0.710	
	SRP5	0.428 ^a	

^a Excluded item.

We checked for convergent validity by finding the average variance (AVE) for each latent construct and factor loading. Hair (2010) state that the outer loading for each latent construct should be greater than 0.6, and the AVE for all latent variables should be greater than 0.50. Table 4.2 shows that the index values, including factor loading and the AVE, were higher than the thresholds. Hence, the convergent validity of all constructs was achieved.

In order to evaluate the attainment of discriminant validity, the researchers used the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) put forth by Henseler (2015) in conjunction with the (Fornell and Larcker, 1981)' criteria. The Fornell and Larcker (1981) standard was used to assess the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) value for

each construct in order to compare them with the constructs that exhibited the highest level of association across two variables. The investigation revealed that the discriminant validity was deemed satisfactory as the square root of each average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the greatest bivariate correlations observed (Table 4.3). Furthermore, the results indicate that the HTMT values were all below the threshold of 0.9 (Hair, 2010) (Table 4.4), hence providing evidence for the discriminant validity of the examined constructs.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	ES	SRP	TF	WP
ES	0.739			
SRP	0.546	0.752		
TF	0.499	0.526	0.868	
WP	0.158	0.193	0.096	0.753

Table 4. HTMT Values

	ES	SRP	TF	WP
ES				
SRP	0.745			
TF	0.660	0.615		
WP	0.191	0.194	0.097	

4.3 Assessing the structural model

The proposed model was subjected to testing using the bootstrapping technique of resampling, which included the generation of 5000 subsamples. PLS-SEM employs the evaluation of structural models' predictive accuracy. In order to assess the performance of a predictive model, it is common practice to use the coefficient of determination (R^2 value) and predictive relevance (Q^2 value). The criteria mentioned by Hair et al. (2017) are used to evaluate the in-sample predictive capability of the model. According to the data provided in Table 4.6, the R^2 values for the three endogenous variables vary between 0.009 and 0.394. The aforementioned values are above the established threshold of 0.26, indicating a notable level of explanatory efficacy. The Q^2 values, derived from the study model, exhibited a range of 0.003 to 0.195. The values surpassed zero. According to Henseler (2015), the aforementioned statement suggests that the study model has attained a sufficient degree of relevance. In conclusion, the model being evaluated has adequate explanatory capacity and predictive significance.

Multicollinearity diagnostics were performed by assessing the variance inflation factor (VIF). Hair et al. (2020) say that the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were always below the set threshold of 3.0. The results in Table 4.7 show that this was true. Hence, the presence of multicollinearity was not seen in the present research.

Table 5. The coefficient of determinant (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2)

Constructs	R^2	Q^2
ES	0.249	0.118
WP	0.009	0.003
SRP	0.394	0.195

Table 6. VIF Values

	ES	SRP	TF	WP
ES		1.353		
SRP				
TF	1.000	1.331		1.000
WP		1.026		

In terms of the hypotheses testing, a bootstrapping resampling process with 5,000 samples was used to use t-tests to find out if the hypotheses were statistically significant. The indicator (f^2) proposed by Cohen (1988) was used to ascertain the effect sizes of the associations under investigation. Based on the findings shown in Table 4.8, it can be concluded that transformational leadership had a positive effect on SRP ($\beta = 0.335$; t -value = 7.102; p -value = 0.000), thus confirming hypothesis H1. The outputs for the effect size (f^2) of the pathways are likewise shown in Table 4.8. While the p -value may ascertain the existence of an impact, it may not provide insights into the extent or degree of the effect. Hence, according

to Henseler (2015)' guidelines, with the effect size (f^2) shown in Table 4.8, the magnitude of the effect of TF on SRP was small.

Following the above procedure, the results of mediating hypotheses are shown in Table 4.8. Specifically, employees' resilience mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and service recovery performance ($\beta = 0.181$; 95% CIs [0.130, 0.235]; t -value = 6.780; p -value = 0.000). Contrary to our expectations, workplace spirituality does not mediate the influence of transformational leadership on service recovery performance ($\beta = 0.01$; 95% CIs [-0.003, 0.026]; t -value = 1.368; p -value = 0.171). These results lead us to reject hypothesis H2 and confirm hypothesis H3.

Table 7. The hypotheses testing results

Direct effect						
Hypotheses	Relationships	β	t-values	p-values	f^2	Result
H1	TF \rightarrow SRP	0.335	7.102	0.000	0.027	Supported
Indirect effect						
Hypotheses	Relationships	β	t-values	p-values	Confidence Interval (5-95%)	Result
H2	TF \rightarrow WP \rightarrow SRP	0.010	1.368	0.171	[-0.003, 0.026]	Not Supported
H3	TF \rightarrow ES \rightarrow SRP	0.181	6.780	0.000	[0.130, 0.235]	Supported

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical implications

The present research makes some significant contributions to the existing literature on service recovery performance among front-line employees.

First, our study contributes to the growing body of research on the contextual and personal factors that influence FLE's service recovery performance by examining the impact of TFL, WP, and workers' resilience. Through our findings, we provide more evidence for the vital role of these factors in predicting FLE's service recovery performance. In particular, this study contributes to the existing literature on service recovery performance (SRP) by focusing on leadership style, workplace spirituality, and resilience as predictors of FLE's service recovery performance. Previous researchers mostly looked at how management commitment to service quality and human resource management (HRM) practices like training, reward, and empowerment affected SRP (Luo, 2019). Notably, the results of this research concur with those of Luo (2019) study and add more empirical evidence to support the idea that transformational leadership encourages employees to actively participate in service recovery processes. In addition, we propose the incorporation of contextual resources (such as transformational leadership) and personal resources (such as workplace spirituality and resilience) into the existing body of service recovery literature, building upon the fundamental principles of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory.

Secondly, the implementation of TFL enhances the resilience of employees, equipping them with the ability to effectively manage and cope with challenging situations such as service breakdowns. These results provide further empirical support for the mediating influence of resilience at the individual level (Hartmann, 2020). Furthermore, the fact that resilience plays a mediating role in the link between TFL and SRP supports the growing idea put forward by Siangchokyoo

(2020) that the key to TFL's effectiveness is followers' transformation.

Thirdly, this research is one of the first attempts to combine Conservation of Resources (COR) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in order to investigate the impact of workplace spirituality and supervisory support on service recovery performance (SRP). Additionally, the study explores the mediating role of employees' resilience in the relationship between TFL and FLE's service recovery performance. The aforementioned results contribute to the advancement of knowledge about the interconnectedness between COR theory and SDT theory, elucidating the mechanism by which they together enhance the service recovery performance of employees. The study results presented herein provide further support for the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and SDT (Deci, 2000). Finally, our study on service recovery contributes to the academic literature by empirically examining the research model using air service providers in Vietnam, an emerging market, as the empirical setting.

5.2 Practical implications

The current study also has practical implications for the aviation sector. The main role of aviation frontline employees in the service recovery journey comes from the high-contact nature of the aviation business as a service-oriented sector. Therefore, it is essential for air service providers to provide sufficient resources to equip these staff with the necessary resources to efficiently manage instances of service failures. Additionally, the hiring of managers with strong transformational leadership styles might improve the service recovery performance of air service providers. Hence, it is essential for these providers to consider the leadership style factor throughout the process of hiring, promoting, and training supervisors. Managers are advised to incorporate transformational leadership strategies into their practices, which encompass several activities, including but not limited to

inspiring and motivating people, fostering a supportive organizational atmosphere, attending to the needs of employees, and actively participating in the practice of active listening.

Lastly, it is important to consider that an individual's resilience plays a crucial role in mediating the association between transformational leadership (TFL) and frontline employees' (FLE) service recovery performance. This statement illuminates the concept that within the air service industry, the implementation of TFL may augment FLE's capacity to effectively manage and navigate through challenges, the unpredictable nature of the work environment, and high-pressure work-related events. It is also vital for managers within the air service industry to recognize their capacity as transformational leaders capable of fostering resilience among their employees.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Our work had several notable limitations. Given the cross-sectional nature of this empirical study, it is recommended that longitudinal research be included to enhance knowledge of potential causal factors and provide a deeper comprehension of the relationships examined in the study. Moreover, this research relies only on self-reported questionnaires obtained from frontline staff. Further research may use a dyadic paradigm to scrutinize the viewpoints of both managerial personnel and frontline employees. Furthermore, it is possible to use boundary-conditional factors, such as personal characteristics, customer status, or culture, in order to thoroughly assess the impact of transformational leadership on the service recovery performance of frontline employees (FLEs).

Finally, the scope of this study is restricted to frontline aviation personnel within a single nation. A future study may explore individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in order to get more insights into the impact of transformational leadership, spirituality in the workplace, and resilience on employee outcomes.

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