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Motives of dysfunctional customer behavior: an empirical study

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to examine the associations between individual factors (personality and demographic variables) and contextual factors (servicescape and situation-specific variables), and the motives that drive episodes of dysfunctional customer behavior.

Design/methodology/approach – Self-report data were collected from a survey of bar, hotel, and restaurant customers ($n = 380$). Confirmatory factor analysis and hierarchical cluster analysis were utilized to analyze the data.

Findings – Analysis of the data revealed three clusters of motives labelled: financial egotists, money grabbers, and ego revengers. Statistically significant differences were revealed across the personality, servicescape, and situation specific variables for each motive. However, no differences were found concerning demographic variables.

Research limitations/implications – This research emphasizes the primacy of three customer behavior motivations. Future research might investigate the motives for dysfunctional customer behavior across different organizational contexts and the dynamics between such motivations.

Practical implications – The findings of the study indicate that service managers can proactively control and manipulate servicescape and situation-specific variables that relate to customer misbehavior motives.

Originality/value – No existing scholarly research has developed a data-grounded understanding of the motivations of dysfunctional customer behaviors. Moreover, to date, no study has explored the associations between customer's motives to misbehave and personality, situation specific, servicescape, and demographic variables.

Keywords Dysfunctional customer behavior, Consumer deviance, Motive, Personality, Servicescape, Consumers, Motivation (psychology)

Paper type Research paper

An executive summary for managers and executive readers can be found at the end of this article.

The activities of dysfunctional customers are recognized by both academic- and practitioner-based literatures to constitute a challenging dilemma for modern organizations. Service workers must maintain equilibrium between the time-honored standpoint of consumer sovereignty (Keat and Abercrombie, 1991), and the practicalities of daily customer abuse performed within and against their firm (Grandey *et al.*, 2007; Yagil, 2008). The disturbing picture from the firm-customer interface indicates that dysfunctional customer behavior is endemic across multiple service sectors. For example, Patterson *et al.* (2009) draw on US based research that shows a 78 percent increase in retail employees requesting counseling, owing to having been victim to incidents of abusive customer behavior. From the UK, the latest study from the Union of Shop, Distributive, and Allied Workers offers a comparable picture. In particular, the survey reveals that one in every ten shop workers have been physically assaulted whilst at work, while 29 percent of

workers have been subjected to verbal abuse within the past month (USDAW, 2009).

While the magnitude of dysfunctional customer behavior is evident in practice (Grove *et al.*, 2004; Arriely, 2007), by comparison, academic understanding of the dynamics of this phenomenon is somewhat limited. Although existing research offers insights into the antecedents of individual (Cox *et al.*, 1993; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2009) and multiple forms (Funches *et al.*, 2009; Reynolds and Harris, 2009) of customer misbehavior, scholarly understanding of the motivations that underpin such behaviors is undeveloped. Consequently, numerous calls for research into deviant customer motives have been raised (Krasnovsky and Lane, 1998; Fisk *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, to the best of our knowledge, no scholarly research has developed a data-grounded understanding of the motivations of dysfunctional customer behaviors. Moreover, to date, no study has explored the associations between customer's motives to misbehave and personality, situation specific, servicescape, and demographic variables. The current paper aims to contribute to these identified research gaps.

First, the current research intends to make an empirical contribution through identifying categories of the motives that underpin dysfunctional customer behaviors. Currently, a dearth of research exists concerning “why” individual consumers misbehave. The current study aims to address this gap through contributing empirical insights derived from self-report data. Second, this study aims to contribute insights into how differently motivated misbehaviors are distinguished by personality variables, servicescape variables, situation-

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specific variables, and demographic variables. In doing so, the current research intends to examine the associations between individual and contextual factors, and the motives that drive episodes of dysfunctional customer behavior.

This paper begins with a review of research into the forms, antecedents, and consequences of dysfunctional customer behavior. Thereafter, an overview of research that examines the motives of customer misbehavior and associated individual and situational variants is presented. After detailing our methodological research design, we present the results of our analysis. We conclude with a discussion of the contributions and limitations of this study.

Dysfunctional customer behavior

Past studies employ multiple terms to describe the activities of customers who behave in a manner that is contrary to the expectations of the organization and broader societal norms. These include, among others, dysfunctional customer behavior (Harris and Reynolds, 2003), deviant customer behavior (Mills and Bonoma, 1979), jaycustomer behavior (Lovelock, 2001), consumer misbehavior (Fullerton and Punj, 2004), and customer badness behavior (Yi and Gong, 2006). We favor the term dysfunctional customer behavior due to the label's connotations of norm-breaking behavior. In the current study, we draw on these labels to refer to dysfunctional customer behavior as behavior in service settings, that violates generally accepted norms of conduct and which is commonly viewed as disreputable (see Fullerton and Punj, 1993). Extant research into the activities of dysfunctional customers can be divided into studies that investigate its forms, antecedents, and consequences. Typically, this research centers on individual forms of misbehavior. However, conceptual and empirical holistic insights are offered by Fullerton and Punj (1993, 1997, 2004), Harris and Reynolds (2003, 2004), and Reynolds and Harris (2005, 2009).

Research that attempts to identify and profile the different forms of customer dysfunction, typically forwards categorizations or typologies. For example, Lovelock (2001) theorizes six forms of jaycustomers ranging from “thieves” to “family feuders” to “vandals”, while Fullerton and Punj (2004) conceptualize five categories of customer misbehaviors. Similarly, Berry and Seiders (2008) offer five forms of theoretically-derived unfair customer behaviors. Drawing on empirical data, Harris and Reynolds (2004) offer eight forms of customer misbehavior including “service workers”, “physical abusers”, and “compensation letter writers”.

Parallel to studies that classify the individual types of dysfunctional customer behavior, is a stream of literature that investigates the antecedents to such forms. Typically, this body of research centers on investigating individual or multiple antecedents to single forms of customer deviance. Identified drivers are numerous ranging from personal to contextual factors. For example, Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) reveal the roles that perceived justice and relationship dimensions play in driving incidents of customer cheating behavior, while Keeffe *et al.* (2008) link failed service recovery and anger to episodes of consumer retaliation. Examining the antecedents of holistic dysfunctional customer behavior, Reynolds and Harris (2009) emphasize personality variables, servicescape variables, and situational variables as pertinent.

Identified consequences of dysfunctional customer behavior vary considerably in terms of physical harm and organizational costs. In their study of bars, hotels, and restaurants, Harris and Reynolds (2003) argue that incidents of customer deviance produce consequences for the firm, frontline employees, and fellow customers. For example, individual outlets may suffer reduced customer patronage, high employee turnover, and increased financial costs owing to the misbehaviors of customers (Harris and Reynolds, 2003). Focusing explicitly on customer-contact hotel personnel, Karatepe *et al.* (2009) provide evidence of an association between customer verbal aggression and employee emotional dissonance, exhaustion, and intent to leave the company.

Motives of dysfunctional customer behavior

While existing research offers a number of interesting insights into the forms, antecedents, and consequences of dysfunctional customer behavior, our understanding of the motives that underpin such deviant behaviors is by comparison, limited. Here, a disparate group of studies offers a small number of factors that are argued to provide some form of explanation as to “why” customers misbehave. Forwarded motives include pathological socialization (Fullerton and Punj, 2004) and perceived egregiousness (Klein *et al.*, 2004). Yet, across these sporadic insights, overwhelmingly, three motives consisting of financial gain, ego gain, and revenge are proposed to constitute the dominant motivators of dysfunctional customer behaviors (see Moore, 1984; Bernstein, 1985; Harris and Reynolds, 2004; Reynolds and Harris, 2005). While each motive is individually recognized as a driver of customer dysfunction, primarily it is argued that such motives are not mutually exclusive. Rather, in a more complex fashion, customer's motives for misbehavior are entwined and interlinked in an amalgamated fashion (Krasnovsky and Lane, 1998; Reynolds and Harris, 2005). However, for reasons of clarity each motive will be discussed individually.

Financial gain motives

Misbehavior by customers that is executed for perceived financial gain is motivated by the attainment of assets in either monetary or physical form. Predominantly, research that underlines the role that perceived financial gain plays in motivating acts of customer deviance focus on thievery. This is demonstrated by the findings of Moore (1984) who utilize self-report data from apprehended shoplifters to reveal that financial motivations explain 70 percent of shoplifting cases. Moreover, Moore (1984) contends that more than one form of shoplifter (amateur and semi-professional) is motivated by perceived financial gains. Complementary evidence is offered by Bernstein (1985) who also identifies financial “need and greed” as a primary motive of shoplifting behavior. Akin to Moore (1984), Bernstein (1985) differentiates between “professional” shoplifters, who steal purely for financial gain derived from the resale of stolen merchandise, and “vagrant” shoplifters who steal for personal financial need. Also distinguishing between professional and non-professional consumer deviants, Reynolds and Harris (2005) focus on customer theft under the guise of illegitimate complaining behavior. Specifically, the authors recognize three forms of misbehaviors that are motivated by monetary

need and greed. These are labeled “professionals”, “freeloaders”, and “fraudulent returners” (Reynolds and Harris, 2005). Using qualitative research methods to investigate customer dysfunction within the hospitality industry, Harris and Reynolds (2004) uncover the role that financial motivation plays in driving acts of what are termed deviant “compensation letter writing”, “service workers”, “oral abusers”, and “professional complainers”. The association between financial motivation and dysfunctional customer behavior is also found to be statistically significant by Albers-Miller (1999) in the context of illicit consumption.

Ego gain motives

While financial motives center on some form of monetary attainment, by contrast, deviant customer activities that are underpinned by ego gains are motivated by an individual’s need for self-worth. The locus of this motive may be internal (the need/desire to feel positive about one’s self) and/or external (the need/desire to perceive that others respect one’s self) in orientation. For example, Bernstein (1985) argues that some individuals engage in shoplifting behavior motivated by an ego-driven sense of self-entitlement to participate in what is viewed as the “good life”. Similarly, Fullerton and Punj (1997) draw on sociological theory to argue that customer misbehavior may be motivated by unfulfilled aspirations. This view is echoed by Kozinets and Handelman’s (1998) contemplation of boycotting behavior in which the authors contend that boycotting can act as a means of self-realization. Offering support, Klein *et al.* (2004) find statistically significant associations between both internally motivated ego self-enhancement and externally focused self-perception in front of others and boycotting behavior. Also distinguishing between internal and external focused ego motivations, Harris and Reynolds (2004) identify multiple forms of dysfunctional customer behavior. Specifically, the authors distinguish between, among others, sexually predatory behavior, verbal abuse, and property abuse. Sexually predatory behavior and verbal abuse are performed as a means of inflating the perpetrator’s own ego. Property abuse, by contrast, is revealed as motivated by ego enhancement within a peer setting. Cox *et al.* (1993) also underlines the role of others and peers in motivating acts of shoplifting. Peer induced esteem seeking is also found by Reynolds and Harris (2005) to motivate acts of illegitimate customer complaining behavior.

Revenge motives

In addition to financially- and ego-driven misbehaviors, revenge is also cited as a motive that drives acts of dysfunctional customer behavior (Funches *et al.*, 2009). Within the current context, revenge refers to an individual customer’s desire to attain vengeance over an organization or individual member of organizational personnel. Consequently, such behaviors are fuelled by the desire to “pay back” or “punish” the target of their grievance (see Tripp and Bies, 1997; Bechwati and Morrin, 2003). Support for the association between revenge motivations and the perpetration of deviant customer behaviors can be found in Harris and Reynolds’s (2004) study of dysfunctional service customers. Here, the authors demonstrate the existence of customers who commit verbal and physical behaviors for retribution and revenge. Drawing on this and aligned studies, Yagil (2008) reviews recent research on aggressive and sexually inappropriate customer behaviors in service

encounters. Analysis of multiple research papers leads Yagil (2008) to confirm that verbally and physically aggressive consumer behaviors are frequently motivated by the offender’s need to retaliate against an organization and/or an individual. Concurrently, Grégoire and Fisher (2008) reveal empirical evidence showing how disconcerted travelers use vindictive complaining and malicious negative word of mouth, against organizations, motivated by revenge as a mechanism to punish and retaliate. Revenge motives are also linked with episodes of shoplifting (Bernstein, 1985) and illegitimate complaining (Reynolds and Harris, 2005).

Variance across motives

Past studies indicate that episodes of customer misbehavior are predominantly motivated by financial-, ego- and revenge-related gains. Expanding these arguments, a diminutive body of research infers linkages between personality, servicescape, situation-specific, and demographic variables, and the motives that drive episodes of customer misbehavior (see Fullerton and Punj, 1993). Concerning personality, the traits of Machiavellianism, aggressiveness, sensation seeking, consumer alienation, and self-esteem are consistently highlighted as important to our understanding of misbehavior across diverse research fields (see Fullerton and Punj, 1993; Reynolds and Harris, 2009). Underpinned by Farrington’s (1993) theoretical framework, Gudjonsson and Sigurdsson (2007) argue that personality traits impact the motives for misbehavior. In this sense, a person’s enduring psychological makeup affects the motives which subsequently drive behaviors. Focusing on the trait of Machiavellianism, several studies note an association between high levels of Machiavellianism and financially motivated misbehaviors. Concentrating on the perpetration of antisocial behaviors McHoskey (1999), notes that high Machs are motivated by financial success. Financial gains are also uncovered as a key motivation for fraudulent guarantee evoking customer behavior by Wirtz and Kum (2004). Examining financially motivated episodes of online piracy and intellectual property abuses, Al-Rafee and Cronan (2006) and Winter *et al.* (2004) separately highlight the importance of the Machiavellianism trait.

Fullerton and Punj (1997) explore conceptually a link between the personality trait of consumer alienation and aberrant customer behavior that is carried out for ego- and financial-related gains. Specifically, Fullerton and Punj (1997) distinguish between personal- and material-centered consumer alienation. Here, consumers experience a sense of powerlessness and subjection derived from a lack of perceived personal and/or financial life attainments. Such traits are argued to manifest in ego and/or financially motivated customer misbehaviors. Offering an alternative explanation, Bernstein (1985) contends an association between consumer alienation and revenge motivated misbehavior as a backlash mechanism against overly powerful organizations. Also exploring misbehaviors underpinned by revenge motivations, Douglas and Martinko (2001) recognize the role of high levels of trait anger. Support for which is offered by Reynolds and Harris (2009) who uncover evidence of verbally and physically aggressive customer behaviors as a revolt mechanism against organizations.

Emphasizing the role that self-esteem plays in generating deviant episodes, John and Klein (2003) argue an association between self-esteem and ego motivated boycotting behaviors.

Cox *et al.* (1993) too stress the importance of self-esteem in the context of ego motivated acts of theft by adolescent shoplifters, while Patterson *et al.* (2009) mirrors these findings concerning rageful behaviors. Extant literature is also supportive of a link between sensation seeking and differently motivated misbehaviors. For example, Kallis *et al.* (1986) associate acts of financially motivated shoplifting behaviors with the propensity to seek thrills and sensations, while Newcomb and McGee (1991) link sensation seeking with ego motivated deviant episodes. Within the scope of boycotting behavior, John and Klein (2003) acknowledge an association between sensation seeking and misbehavior motivated by revenge. Thus:

H1a-e. Differently motivated customer misbehavior is (respectively) distinguished by differences in (a) Machiavellianism, (b) aggressiveness, (c) sensation seeking, (d) consumer alienation, and (e) self-esteem.

Grounded in the stimulus-organism-response framework, Bitner's (1992) seminal model underlines the association between servicescape design and normative customer behaviors. Focusing on negative behavior, growing research derived primarily from environmental criminology, stress a link between servicescape design and the forms of misbehavior perpetrated within such environments (Dotter and Roebuck, 1988; Rose and Neidermeyer, 1999; Reynolds and Harris, 2009). In this regard, it is argued that different types and designs of servicescape environments are likely to be associated with misbehaviors that are motivated for different reasons. Specifically, the facets of layout and design, atmospherics, fellow customers, exterior environment, crowding, and perceived employee service are championed as pertinent.

Focusing on acts of thefts, Russell (1973) and Cox *et al.* (1993) individually note an association between store design and financially motivated forms of shoplifting. Reviewing extant literature, Nicholls (2005) highlights a linkage between the interior design and atmospherics of bar environments and ego motivated forms of aggressive behavior. Specifically, restricted movement due to poor design and red interior colorings are argued to contribute to the perpetration of deviance. Comparably, Grove *et al.* (2004), claim that physical, atmospheric, and social surroundings can act as triggers for differently motivated acts of customer misbehavior. Specifically, the authors argue that cramped, dirty, and overly hot/cold service environments may foster acts of revengeful misbehaviors as a physical means of venting against the offending firm. Additionally, the authors identify ego motivated misbehaviors which are triggered by the negative behaviors of fellow customers. In this sense, customers misbehave to restore or assert their internal and/or external sense of self worth.

Ego motivated episodes of customer deviance are frequently linked to the social facets of servicescape environments. For example, Yagil (2008) contemplates dysfunctional episodes wherein the perpetrator is stimulated to misbehave by perceived ego-gains owing to the presence of other customers within the servicescape environment. In addition, to uncovering a link between fellow customers and ego-driven misbehavior, Harris and Reynolds (2004) forward support for an association between other patrons and financially motivated misbehaviors. Specifically, the authors detail incidents wherein customers mirror fellow customer's

successful misbehaviors in a copy-cat fashion for their own financial gain. The density of other customers in the form of crowding is also shown to associate with misbehaviors that are motivated by ego enhancement and revenge (Homel and Clark, 1994). Misbehavior that is underpinned by ego- and revenge-based motivations is linked with customer's perceptions of employees. Here, misbehaviors are performed as a mechanism of retaliation and ego-maintenance against an employee who is perceived to have performed in a substandard or disparaging manner during service exchange (Harris and Reynolds, 2004; Grégoire and Fisher, 2008). Thus:

H2a-f. Differently motivated customer misbehavior is (respectively) distinguished by differences in (a) layout and design, (b) atmospherics, (c) fellow customers, (d) exterior environment, (e) crowding, and (f) perception of employee service.

In addition to servicescape related variables, situation-specific variables including loyalty intentions, the severity of the misbehavior performed, and the perceived opportunity and risk within the service setting, are linked with customer misbehaviors that are underpinned by differing motivations. For example, Grégoire and Fisher (2008) reveal evidence of an association between loyal customers who feel betrayed by a firm and their dysfunctional behaviors against the firm as a mechanism to retaliate and obtain revenge. While Grégoire and Fisher (2008) link high levels of loyalty with revenge motivated misbehaviors, Bechwati and Morrin (2003) and Wirtz and Kum (2004), associate low levels of loyalty with financially motivated misbehaviors. In this regard, when patronage intentions are weak or absent, consumers can misbehave for material and monetary gain without fear of future embarrassment or reprisal from the organization or its personnel.

Examining the severity of customer misbehavior, Reynolds and Harris (2009) infer that different motivations associate with misdemeanors of varying extremities. Specifically, the authors reveal misbehaviors varying in severity that are underpinned by differing motivations. Reported behaviors range from making fraudulent complaints for financial gain, to arguing with a fellow customer for ego enhancement, to revengefully physically striking an employee. Support is also offered by the conceptual works of Fullerton and Punj (1993) and Lovelock (2001).

Perceived opportunity to commit an act and assessments of the risk of the behavior are also found to relate to different forms and motives of customer misbehavior. In this sense, person's motives to misbehave are related to their personal estimation of misbehavior attractiveness and accessibility against organizational constraints and punishments. This is demonstrated by Moore (1984) and Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2010) in which perceived opportunity is cited as an important variable in understanding financially driven episodes of shoplifting and illegitimate complaining. Also investigating the activities of illegitimate complainers, Reynolds and Harris (2005) distinguish between ego and financially motivated misbehaviors with relation to perceived opportunity. Focusing on acts of shoplifting, Cox *et al.* (1993) identify an association between low levels of perceived risk and financially motivated misbehaviors. Corresponding findings are offered by Tonglet (2002) who forwards a statistically significant link between perceived likelihood of

apprehension and monetary driven acts of consumer theft. Thus:

H3a-d. Differently motivated customer misbehavior is distinguished by differences in (a) loyalty intentions, (b) the severity of customer misbehavior, (c) perceived opportunity and, (d) perceived risk.

The final group of variables of interest in the current study relates to demographic variables. Specifically, past studies indicate that misbehaviors that are underpinned by different motivations may be distinguished by differences in gender, age, income, and educational achievement. This is demonstrated by extant studies that indicate differences in the deviant activities and motivations that are executed by males and females. For example, studies show that males are more inclined to vandalize and behave in a violent fashion in comparison to their female counterparts (Harris, 1977; Moir and Jessel, 1997). In this sense, men are suggested to engage in aggressive ego and revenge motivated misbehaviors more than women are. Complementary findings are offered by Harris and Reynolds (2004) wherein younger males are more likely to indulge in misdemeanors motivated by ego enhancement and revenge compared to their female counterparts. However, middle-aged women rather than men are revealed to engage in financially driven acts of fraudulent complaint writing (Harris and Reynolds, 2004).

Financially motivated misdeeds are frequently linked to individuals with low levels of income. The findings of Jolson (1974) and Kallis *et al.* (1986) reflect this and show that shoplifters tend to be male, young, with low levels of income, motivated by financial gains. In contrast, Piron and Young (2000) reveal a positive relationship between income and retail borrowing activities. Specifically, the authors find that the majority of retail borrowing behavior is committed by females who are motivated by ego related social needs. Examining consumer retaliation, Huefner and Hunt (2000) find links between younger and less educated persons and revenge motivated misbehaviors. Investigating a broad range of demographic variables, Fullerton *et al.* (1996) support associations between low levels of income, education, and age and unethical behaviors of varying motivations. These findings can be explained in part by Kohlberg's (1969) theory of cognitive moral development which links ethical development and righteousness to life course progression. Thus:

H4a-d. Differently motivated customer misbehavior is (respectively) distinguished by differences in (a) gender, (b) age, (c) income, and (d) educational achievement.

Method

The hospitality industry provides an ideal context for this study owing to the sector's economic importance and key features, including extended and close customer contact (Harris and Ogbonna, 2006). In particular, we focus on incidents of consumer misbehavior within the hotel, restaurant, and bar sector because this has been shown to be a pertinent area of research (Reynolds and Harris, 2006; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2009).

Potential participants were approached in a public space (e.g. shopping malls) to ensure anonymity and foster truthful recall. Each participant was asked a screening question to

determine their suitability (regarding, having deliberately misbehaved within a bar, hotel, or restaurant during the past three months), and so that the researcher could offer confidentiality assurances. Of the 1,300 customers approached, 696 declined to participate and 220 indicated that they had misbehaved in the past but not within a hospitality-based outlet, or had misbehaved in a services setting as an employee. Consequently, 384 questionnaires were completed (four of which were incomplete and removed from the sample). This yielded a response rate of nearly 30 percent. Of the respondents, 53.9 percent were female, the median age was 51 and the largest group comprised respondents who earned between \$40,000 and \$60,000 annually.

Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were required to describe an incident of dysfunctional behavior that they had perpetrated. This enabled us to gain a better understanding of the episode and to record both the form and the severity of the misbehavior. This first stage of data collection assists in stimulating memory recall, helps respondents complete the questionnaire in a more focused frame of mind (Podsakoff *et al.* 2003), and fosters trust between the participant and researcher. Thereafter, respondents individually completed a structured questionnaire that focused on the single incident.

Measure development

The current study employed 19 measures, ten derived from existing studies, while nine were newly created. In adherence with standard psychometric scale development procedures in order to gain insight into the underlying dimensions of each construct, we undertook an extensive review of existing literature. In addition, we held 27 individual in-depth interviews with a sample of consumers, frontline employees, service managers, and scholars. A second panel of consumers, service workers and academicians were subsequently employed ($n = 21$) during Q-sort procedures, which revealed both a satisfactory Kappa's coefficient (Cohen, 1960) and "hit ratio" (Moore and Benbasat's (1991). Thereafter, we conducted two pilot tests of the full research instrument. The first pilot test utilized a sample of 50 consumers. Here, specific attention was devoted to the screening stage of data collection, eliciting sensitive information from the respondent, and the phrasing of the newly created measures. The second pilot test ($n = 60$) trialed the amended measures. The data from the pilot tests were assessed for construct validity and reliability and were found to meet the standard benchmark criteria.

Measures of constructs

The scales used for each of the 19 constructs examined within this study are presented in the Appendix. In order to increase the reliability of our findings, all measures employed a seven-point Likert-type scale. All five personality-related scales were derived from existing measures. Machiavellianism was estimated using five items from the MACH IV scale (Christie and Geis, 1970). We assessed sensation-seeking propensity using four items forwarded by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1992). Consumer alienation was measured using six items derived from Singh (1990). Self-esteem was gauged using six items from Rosenberg's (1965) measure. Five measures were employed to assess servicescape related constructs. We operationalized servicescape atmospheric

characteristics using four refined items from d'Astous's (2000) measure. Crowding was measured using three items from Hui and Bateson (1991). Six items derived from Olsen and Johnson's (2003) measure of service were employed to assess perceptions of employee service. Using the scale development procedures detailed above, we developed a five-item measure of servicescape layout and design, a six-item measure of fellow customers, a five-item scale that reflect the servicescape's exterior environment, a five-item measure of perceived opportunity, and a three-item measure of perceived risk.

To measure the severity of misbehavior performed a four-item scale was developed. Due to the wealth of research on deviance that highlights the significance of norm-violation (see Fullerton and Punj, 2004; Yi and Gong, 2006; Reynolds and Harris, 2006), norms were conceptualized as central to the measurement of misbehavior severity and were championed by each participants during scale development procedures. Loyalty intentions were gauged using five items derived from Zeithaml *et al.* (1996) encompassing consumer's word-of-mouth, switching, and repatronage intentions. The measures for each motive (financial gain, ego gain, and revenge) were inspired by the findings of Harris and Reynolds (2004) and other related studies (see Fullerton and Punj, 1997; Reynolds and Harris, 2005; Grégoire and Fisher, 2008). Scale development procedures produced a three-item scale for each motive. Finally, owing to the self-report and sensitive nature of our research focus, we felt it pertinent to assess the affect of social desirability bias on the constructs and relationships of interest. Consequently, four items from Reynolds (1982) were utilized. Details of all measures are provided in the Appendix.

Scale assessment

Scale assessment began with exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation to purify the measures employed. Items were retained which loaded significantly onto the scales and were strongly correlated to the scale. Thereafter, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to gauge the measurement model. To obtain a sample size-to-estimated parameter ratio greater than five and reliable parameter estimates (see Bentler and Chou, 1987), we examined the psychometric properties of our measures by estimating two measurement models. The first CFA model included the measures pertaining to psychological variables, including both measures of motive (financial gain, ego gain, and revenge motives) and personality variables (Machiavellianism, aggressiveness, sensation seeking, consumer alienation, and self-esteem). The second CFA model focused on situational variables including servicescape characteristics (layout and design, atmospherics, fellow customers, exterior environment, crowding, and, perceptions of employee service) as well as four situation-specific variables (loyalty intentions, severity of customer misbehavior, perceived opportunity, and perceived risk). Shook *et al.* (2004) argue that multiple indices of goodness-of-fit should be used to assess the validity of measurement models. Accordingly, absolute (Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation), incremental (Comparative Fit Index), and parsimonious (chi-squared by degrees of freedom ratio – see Marsh and Hocevar, 1985) fit measures were employed.

The first CFA of psychological factors yielded a very good parsimonious, incremental, and absolute fit to the data,

producing a chi-square (χ^2) of 965.16, degrees of freedom (df) of 532, a normed chi-squared (χ^2/df) of 1.8, a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.97, a non-normed fit index (NNFI) of 0.97, and a root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.05. The second measurement model (of situational variables) also led to acceptable goodness-of-fit statistics with $\chi^2 = 1734.50$, $\text{df} = 944$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.8$, CFI = 0.98, NNFI = 0.98, and RMSEA of 0.05. In support of convergent validity, for both models each item had a factor loading in excess of 0.60 and proved significantly related to its underlying factor (t -value > 2.58).

In addition to CFA, scale reliability was assessed through the examination of three statistics (Cronbach alpha coefficients, composite reliabilities, and average variance extracted). First, the estimates of internal consistency via Cronbach coefficient alphas found alpha coefficients which ranged from 0.80 (risk) to 0.98 (revenge); all of which are well above the minimum threshold criterion of 0.70 specified in Nunnally (1978). Second, composite reliabilities were estimated and found to range from 0.78 (risk) to 0.92 (revenge). Again, the calculated reliabilities were well above the required minimum level of 0.60 recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and the more rigorous 0.70 desirable threshold of Garver and Mentzer (1999). Finally, average variance extracted (AVE) were estimated for each scale. The results of this analysis yielded AVEs, which exceeded the suggested minimum value of 0.50 (see Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Overall construct validity was assessed through the concurrent analysis of convergent and discriminant validity using a variety of approaches and tests (see Hair *et al.*, 2006). To improve content validity, the measurement instrument was subjected to a number of pretests (see earlier). To gauge the validation of index operationalization, items in each scale were correlated to the scale (see Nunnally, 1978) revealing that each item significantly correlates in the anticipated direction, thus providing evidence in support of convergent validity (see Cook and Campbell, 1979). Further support for convergent validity was found on the analysis of AVEs, all of which had a loading in excess of 0.50 and was significantly related to its underlying factor (see Fornell and Larcker, 1981). To assess discriminant validity, the test recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was adopted. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend comparing the AVEs to the variance shared between the construct and other constructs in the model. This procedure found that for each measure, the AVE is greater than the square of the parameter estimates between two constructs, supporting discriminant validity.

Results

After gauging the reliability and validity of the measures employed, analysis focused on identifying and establishing groups of similarly motivated misbehaving customers. To explore potential clusters of similarly motivated customers, the hierarchical clustering routine of Ward (1963) was adopted on the recommendations of Wishart (1987). The author observes that this procedure consistently generates compact spherical clusters more effectively than other methods. Through the use of the standard "cluster" analysis technique in SPSS, we clustered misbehaving customers according to the three potential motivations (financial, egoistical, and revenge-oriented). Given the sample size, a wide range of potentially robust cluster solutions were

possible (see Lehmann, 1979). Detailed evaluation of potential cluster solutions revealed that three-cluster solution offered the clearest interpretation. To test the strength of this three-cluster solution, the four and two-cluster solutions were examined and in each of these latter analyses, the clusters showed no strong pattern that would facilitate description. Analysis of the three-cluster solution revealed that the cluster means of each measure of motive for customer misbehavior (used as the cluster criteria) was significantly different using a one-way analysis of variance. Consequently, the three-cluster solution was accepted.

An examination of the three-cluster solution according to the criteria of clustering (the three measures of motives for misbehavior), led to the labeling of the clusters as:

- 1 Financial egotists.
- 2 Money grabbers.
- 3 Ego revengers.

The descriptive statistics of the three cluster criteria for each of the three-cluster solutions is presented below (see Table I).

The cluster labeled “Financial egotists” ($n = 156$) exhibits cluster means for financially motivated and ego motivated customer misbehavior that are notably above the global mean. Thus, suggesting that customers in this cluster are motivated to misbehave for a mixture of financial and egotistical reasons. The second cluster labeled “Money grabbers” ($n = 113$) has cluster means significant below the global mean for both ego and revenge motivated behavior but significant above in the case of financially motivated misbehavior. Customers within this cluster appear driven almost exclusively by financial motives. Finally, the cluster identified as “Ego revengers” ($n = 111$) exhibits cluster means for ego and revenge motivated customer misbehavior well above the global mean, indicating that such customers are driven to misbehave for reasons of ego and revenge.

An objective of this study is to describe the distinguishing characteristics of the personality, service contexts, situation-specific, and demographic factors for differently motivated acts of dysfunctional customer behavior. Consequently, for each cluster, the descriptive statistics of the measures of personality, service contexts, situation-specific, and demographic factors were calculated (see Table II). These statistics indicate a number of differences between the service context and dynamics of each of the three clusters. Financial egoist motivations for customer misbehavior occur where individuals have a strong need for sensation seeking and happen in broadly “average” service settings. Such customers appear to have above global mean intentions to be loyal and appear to be slightly older than Money grabbers or ego revengers. Money grabbers are markedly alienated, have low self-esteem, and perceive the risk associated with misbehaving as high. Their incidents of misbehavior are typically less severe than the global mean and appear to occur in salubrious service settings, to which they have a strong desire to be loyal

in the future. In cases of ego revenge motives for customer misbehavior, customers appear highly aggressive, sensation seeking, and alienated. Incidents of ego revenge motivated misbehavior appear to occur in less salubrious servicescapes with high levels of perceived opportunity to misbehave, be severe in form, and occur where there is little intention of future loyalty.

Analysis of differences between clusters

A multivariate analysis of variance found significant overall differences between the financial egotists, money grabbers, and ego revengers clusters at the 0.001 level of significance.

A second phase of variance analysis was conducted in order to establish the extent to which the personality, service contexts, situation-specific, and demographic characteristics of the three clusters were significantly different (see Table III). Table III presents the results of this analysis, which found that all five of the personality variables, all six of the servicescape characteristics, and all four situation-specific measures were significantly different across the three-cluster solution. Interestingly, none of the four demographic factors was significantly different. These results indicate that in broad terms, the personality, service contexts, and situation-specific characteristics of the financial egotists, money grabbers, and ego revengers clusters are significantly different. By contrast, no differences of demographic factors appear statistically significant.

The findings documented in Table III provide general indications of differences. However, such finding could be misleading. Consequently, a third phase of variance analysis was conducted. This ensures that the analysis of cluster variance across individual measures conducted earlier was a fair representation of differences between each of the three clusters (and not merely an artifact of differences between two of the three clusters). Subsequently, to avoid the over-estimation of statistical significance, a multivariate analysis of variance using joint multivariate Bonferroni 95 percent confidence intervals was calculated (see Table IV). This procedure reveals mixed results for differences in personality. Specifically, of the 15 potential differences between the three clusters, 11 are significant and four non-significant. Clearer results are evident for service contexts, situation-specific, and demographic characteristics. For the six servicescape and the four situation-specific characteristics, all differences between the clusters are significant. However, no statistically significant difference is found between the demographic characteristics of any of the clusters of differently motivated customer misbehavior.

H1a-e argues that differently motivated customer misbehavior is (respectively) distinguished by differences in Machiavellianism, aggressiveness, sensation seeking, consumer alienation, and self-esteem. The analysis of variance across clusters reveals that of the 15 possible

Table I Descriptive statistics of clusters criteria

Motive	Cluster one Financial egotists	Cluster two Money grabbers	Cluster three Ego revengers	Global mean	Standard deviation
Financial gain	3.79	5.40	1.33	3.55	2.24
Ego gain	4.03	1.30	4.30	3.29	2.00
Revenge	2.52	1.15	5.84	3.08	2.20

Table II Descriptive statistics of factor characteristics

	Financial egotists	Money grabbers	Ego revengers	Global mean	Standard deviation
<i>Personality variables</i>					
Machiavellianism	3.66	3.77	3.26	3.58	1.49
Aggressiveness	3.98	3.27	5.12	4.10	1.69
Sensation seeking	4.82	4.16	5.01	4.68	1.61
Consumer alienation	3.67	3.32	4.37	3.76	1.61
Self-esteem	3.11	3.15	3.67	3.29	1.39
<i>Servicescape variables</i>					
Layout and design	3.85	3.07	4.89	3.92	1.70
Atmospherics	3.90	3.29	5.24	4.11	1.90
Fellow customers	3.50	2.62	4.46	3.51	1.98
Exterior environment	3.20	2.62	4.48	3.46	1.86
Crowding	4.04	3.22	5.59	4.25	2.11
Employee service	3.23	2.37	4.49	3.34	1.86
<i>Situation-specific variables</i>					
Loyalty intentions	4.45	5.03	2.76	4.13	1.75
Severity of misbehavior	4.50	3.67	5.33	4.50	1.71
Perceived opportunity	4.78	4.65	5.51	4.93	1.53
Perceived risk	4.70	5.15	4.24	4.70	1.62
<i>Demographic variables</i>					
Gender	1.55	1.58	1.50	1.54	0.50
Age	3.55	3.51	3.51	3.44	1.37
Income	2.62	2.62	2.72	2.65	1.05
Educational attainment	1.96	1.81	1.86	1.89	0.83

Table III Analysis of variance across individual factors

	F-value	Significance of F
<i>Personality variables</i>		
Machiavellianism	3.92	0.002
Aggressiveness	41.92	0.000
Sensation seeking	9.00	0.000
Consumer alienation	11.66	0.000
Self-esteem	6.32	0.002
<i>Servicescape variables</i>		
Layout and design	38.21	0.000
Atmospherics	36.70	0.000
Fellow customers	27.49	0.000
Exterior environment	45.59	0.000
Crowding	45.32	0.000
Employee service	45.28	0.000
<i>Situation-specific variables</i>		
Loyalty intentions	70.08	0.000
Severity of misbehavior	30.65	0.000
Perceived opportunity	9.18	0.000
Perceived risk	8.47	0.000
<i>Demographic variables</i>		
Gender	0.729	0.483
Age	0.39	0.681
Income	0.65	0.522
Educational attainment	1.21	0.299

differences across clusters, 11 differences are statistically significant, indicating broad support for *H1a-e*. *H1b* is fully supported with all clusters exhibiting significantly different levels of aggressiveness. However, *H1a*, *H1d*, and *H1e* are only partially supported as non significant differences are found between the levels of Machiavellianism, alienation, and self-esteem of financial egotists and money grabbers (although significant differences are found between ego revengers and both financial egotists and money grabbers). Similarly, *H1c* is only partially supported in that non-significant difference is found between the levels of sensation seeking of financial egotists and ego revengers (although significant differences exist between money grabbers and both financial egotists and ego revengers).

H2a-f contends that differently motivated customer misbehavior is (respectively) distinguished by differences in layout and design, atmospherics, fellow customers, exterior environment, crowding, and perception of employee service. Similarly, *H3a-d* argues that differently motivated customer misbehavior is distinguished by differences in loyalty intentions, the severity of customer misbehavior, perceived opportunity, and perceived risk. The results of analysis of variance between each cluster for each factor solution (see Table IV) finds that both *H2a-f* and *H3a-d* are fully accepted as for each factors, the differences between clusters are all significant.

Finally, *H4a-d* claims that differently motivated customer misbehavior is (respectively) distinguished by differences in gender, age, income, and educational achievement. The results presented in Table IV support the earlier findings of

Table IV Analysis of variance between each cluster for each factor solution

Hypotheses	Groups with non-significant differences	Groups with significant differences	Support for hypotheses
<i>Personality variables</i>			
H1a. Machiavellianism	1-2	1-3, 2-3	Partially supported
H1b. Aggressiveness		All	Fully supported
H1c. Sensation seeking	1-3	1-2, 2-3	Partially supported
H1d. Consumer alienation	1-2	1-3, 2-3	Partially supported
H1e. Self-esteem	1-2	1-3, 2-3	Partially supported
<i>Servicescape variables</i>			
H2a. Layout and design		All	Fully supported
H2b. Atmospherics		All	Fully supported
H2c. Fellow customers		All	Fully supported
H2d. Exterior environment		All	Fully supported
H2e. Crowding		All	Fully supported
H2f. Employee service		All	Fully supported
<i>Situation-specific variables</i>			
H3a. Loyalty intentions		All	Fully supported
H3b. Severity of misbehavior		All	Fully supported
H3c. Perceived opportunity		All	Fully supported
H3d. Perceived risk		All	Fully supported
<i>Demographic variables</i>			
H4a. Gender	All		Fully supported
H4b. Age	All		Fully supported
H4c. Income	All		Fully supported
H4d. Educational attainment	All		Fully supported

Notes: 1 = Financial egotists; 2 = Money grabbers; 3 = Ego revengers

variance across individual factors (see Table III), in that there are no significant differences across any of the four demographic factors, for any of the three clusters. Consequently, H4a-d is rejected in full.

Conclusions and implications

A survey of customers revealed three differing motives for their dysfunctional customer behavior, labeled:

- 1 Financial egotists.
- 2 Money grabbers.
- 3 Ego revengers.

Subsequent analysis finds a range of variances across these motives and between the categories of motives. The remainder of this paper is devoted to a discussion of the scholarly and managerial implications of these findings as well as a brief discussion of the limitations that constrain the results and conclusions.

The first contribution of this study is methodological and derives the development of scales that gauge dysfunctional customer behavior motives. Owing to an overwhelming focus on the antecedents of single forms of customer misbehavior, existing research lacks empirical measures for utilization in the assessment of misbehavior motives during self-report data collection. In developing and testing new measures for reliability and validity, the current study provides a basis for future investigations in this area. In this sense, while the developed scales measuring ego gains, financial gains, and

revenge are found to be valid, future research will be needed to test, develop, and probably extend these scales. Nevertheless, the scales developed constitute a first tentative step in the development of scales for motives of customer misbehavior that subsequent studies can use and develop.

The second contribution of this study centers on the emergence of three statistically and conceptually distinct categories of motives for dysfunctional customer behavior. While previous studies acknowledge the motives of individual forms of misbehavior as part of broader investigations (e.g. Bernstein, 1985; Harris and Reynolds, 2004), prior to the current study, empirical and grounded studies of consumer motives for misbehavior are neglected. The limited research into the motives for such dysfunctional customer behaviors can be best described as sporadic and disjointed, in that, the focus of such research tends to be on specific forms of misbehavior (such as extreme acts of violence). Through focusing on narrow forms of customer deviance, scholars have developed interesting insights into restricted phenomena. Although such a focus has merits, it is to the detriment of a broader understanding of customer dynamics. The *raison d'être* of the current study is to broaden the focus of analysis to encompass a range of common customer misbehaviors and to develop a categorization that is more generalizable and applicable to a wider range of contexts. As such, a key empirical contribution of this study is the proposal, testing, and verification of three distinct motives for dysfunctional customer behavior.

Although the three motives are grounded in survey data, the developed categorization is consistent with a range of earlier studies that have argued that motivations for misbehavior are rarely simplistic and are often characterized by multiple and complex rationales. A number of earlier studies have argued that for reasons of parsimony inter-twined motives should be studied separately. In this study, we took the view that such a reductionist approach would devalue the insights gained and provided for more complex or over-lapping rationales in our research design and analysis approach. The consequence of this approach was fruitful, in that three categories of motives emerged from the analysis; each with complex motivations (for example, “Ego revengers” are motivated by both “ego” and “revenge” needs). While such an approach leads to a more complex picture of misbehavior motives, we argue that the grounded nature of the insights supports the approach taken and leads to a more complete (if potentially confusing) understanding of misbehavior motives.

The third empirical contribution of this study pertains to the finding of statistically significant differences in the personality, servicescape, and situation-specific dynamics between and across the motive types. In the case of measures of servicescape and situation-specific dynamics, all of the six servicescape factors and all of the four situation-specific factors were found to be different for each of the types of customer motives. This strongly supports the view that the context in which misbehavior occurs exerts a strong influence not only on the form of customer misbehavior but also more importantly on the motive for that behavior. This is a hugely important finding for practitioners that we discuss more fully below. Although different aspects of personality were found not to differ between motive categories, of the 15 potential differences between customer motives and personality, eleven were statistically different. These findings support a range of earlier studies which find that individuals’ cognitive characteristics strongly affect their behavior. In this regard, this study supports the view that the personality of customers imposes cognitive pressures on their behavior in exchange contexts that motivates behaviors that others view as deviant norm-breaking. Finally, this study provides some clarification regarding the links between demographic characteristics and dysfunctional customer behavior motives. In contrast to a raft of earlier theory regarding such links (see Kallis *et al.*, 1986; Moir and Jessel, 1997; Huefner and Hunt, 2000), the current study refutes the suggestion that gender, age, income, or educational attainment differ across motives for customer misbehavior. In this sense, different motives for customer misbehavior are equally common across gender types, different ages, levels of income, and education levels.

Managerial and public policy implications

Although a range of different managerial implications can be derived from the result of this study, possibly the most pertinent centers on the findings regarding servicescape and situation-specific variables. Briefly, as mentioned earlier, significant differences were found between all of the servicescape and situation-specific variables across each of the three motives for misbehavior. This finding is especially profound as many of these variables are controllable and manipulatable by the organization while the remaining variables are partially controllable. In this sense, while it is easy to dismiss customer misbehavior as unpredictable, the current study finds that the motives for such misbehaviors

vary according to managerially-controllable servicescape and situation-specific variables. In this regard, such variables might be influenced by astute manipulation. For example, the current findings indicate that crowded, dirty, stuffy, and run down environments are linked with differently motivated misbehaviors. Thus, managers should ensure that servicescapes are designed and constructed to ensure suitable ventilation, layout functionality and desirable patronage density. Thereafter, servicescape maintenance to foster customers’ perceptions of hygienic, cared for, and comfortable environmental surrounding appear important in managing episodes of customer misbehavior. This might be achieved through stringent cleaning, painting and repairs, and control of temperature and noise levels.

Building on the rudiments of good servicescape design, the findings of the current study also highlight the importance of customer-to-firm and customer-to-customer compatibility. In this sense, in attempting to dispel incidents of customer misbehavior, service managers should ensure a good degree of coherency between the design of the servicescape and the characteristics and wants of target consumers. Compatibility should also be sought between employee’s personalities and abilities and the traits and needs of desired customers. Visible personnel- and electronic-based security systems throughout the servicescape might also assist in heightening customers’ perceptions of risk and thus reducing perceived opportunities to misbehave successfully. However, future research is clearly needed to explore how precise variations in servicescape and situation-specific variables can impact on behavior rather than motive. Yet, the current study suggests that judicious servicescape manipulation could significantly change ensuing misbehavior motives and could well impact on not only the frequency but also the proclivity for this type of behavior.

The findings of numerous differences between the three motives and personality variables are also important for practitioners. The findings clearly indicate that the personality of customers varies in relation to their motives for misbehavior. While such personality variables cannot be controlled by service personnel or consumers themselves, the knowledge that different personality characteristics are associated with particular motivations has implications for frontline service personnel. Training of frontline personnel to recognize particular personality characteristics could prove an effective means of identifying individuals likely to be motivated to act in a particular way. Such an approach might influence employees’ interaction styles with such persons, thus reducing the occurrence of particularly motivated acts or minimizing the escalation and impact of such incidents. For example, identified aggressive personalities might be soothed by a calm and courteous employee, while alienated consumers might be pacified by an employee with a personally attentive and caring manner.

Such managerial implications foster broader implications for public policy makers. That is, while it may be beneficial for service firms to train employees in methods of misbehavior management and deterrence, from a public policy perspective it would appear fruitful to also educate customers. In this sense, the root of the problem must be addressed. Recent research indicates an enduring decline in etiquette across westernized societies (Alkon, 2009; Fisk *et al.*, 2010). Uncivil and aggressive behaviors during service exchange, although often illegal, are increasingly commonplace (Reynolds and

Harris, 2009). The current study highlights that customer misbehavior is frequently motivated by self-serving gains. Perpetrators are found to misbehave to serve their own financial- and ego-based needs. In this regard, the current study underlines the need for public-focused education that installs mutual regard and community respect. Moreover, the employee customer divide is transient. Employees are customers, customers are employees, and both parties are actors in society. Thus, such deterioration of behavior perpetuates into a broader societal context. In this sense, local, state, and federal education initiatives that promote social norms, indicating the wider and long-term consequences of such undesirable behavior is warranted. The active linking of frequently committed minor misbehaviors and altercations to wider societal decay, might increase the perceived undesirability and personal responsibility for what is often viewed as “harmless” or “faceless” actions.

Limitations and further research

Although it is argued that the current study provides a solid foundation for future research into customer misbehavior motives, three main limitations provide direction for future research. First, while the current study illuminates the association between personality, servicescape, situation-specific, and demographic variables and deviant's motivations for performing such misdeeds, future research should investigate the relationships between such antecedents, motives, and forms of misbehavior in a holistic manner. In this regard, a fuller explanation of the mechanisms that underpin episodes of customer deviance should be examined empirically. Second, although the current study offers three newly developed scales regarding financial, ego, and revenge motivated customer misbehaviors, future research should assess the generalizability of these scales in broader service and industrial contexts. The current study focuses on misbehaviors within hospitality settings and consequently, the developed measures need to be assessed within different contextual situations. Future scale development and verification is needed to develop scholarly understanding of the dynamics of dysfunctional customer behavior and more specifically the motivations that drive such misbehaviors. Third, derived from extant literature, the current study focuses on three motivations (ego, financial, and revenge). However, in practice different organizational contexts may foster a broader range of motivations than are discussed in the current paper. Consequently, future research would benefit from investigating a wider range of motivations for customer misbehaviors and the dynamics between such motivations.

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Appendix. Construct and measurement items

Financial gain ($\alpha = 0.90$, CR = 0.84, AVE = 0.63)

- 1 I did this behavior to gain some money.
- 2 I did this behavior in order to gain something for nothing.
- 3 I made some money from behaving in this way.

Ego Gain ($\alpha = 0.87$, CR = 0.84, AVE = 0.54)

- 1 I did this behavior to feel good about myself.
- 2 I did this behavior because other people were with me.
- 3 I did this behavior in order to impress other people who were around me.

Revenge ($\alpha = 0.98$, CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.79)

- 1 I did this behavior to teach someone a lesson.
- 2 I did this behavior in order to 'get back' at someone
- 3 This behavior was an act of revenge.

Machiavellianism ($\alpha = 0.85$, CR = 0.79, AVE = 0.52)

- 1 Honesty is always the best policy. (reverse scored)
- 2 The majority of people are basically good and kind. (reverse scored)

- 3 Most people who get ahead in the world lead good and honest lives. (reverse scored)
- 4 A white lie is often a good thing.

Aggressiveness ($\alpha = 0.92$, $CR = 0.88$, $AVE = 0.56$)

- 1 Given enough provocation, I may hit another person.
- 2 I rarely find myself disagreeing with other people. (reverse scored)
- 3 When people annoy me, I tell them what I think.
- 4 When frustrated, I let my irritation show.
- 5 Some of my friends think that I am hot-headed.
- 6 When people are especially nice, I wonder what they want.

Sensation seeking ($\alpha = 0.88$, $CR = 0.82$, $AVE = 0.54$)

- 1 I do not like to try new foods that I have never tasted before. (reverse scored)
- 2 I prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable.
- 3 I would like to try an 'extreme' sport such as bungee jumping.
- 4 I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening, unconventional, or illegal.

Consumer alienation ($\alpha = 0.92$, $CR = 0.87$, $AVE = 0.54$)

- 1 In general, the customer is usually the least important consideration to most companies.
- 2 In general, shopping is usually an unpleasant experience.
- 3 In general, people must be willing to tolerate poor service from most businesses.
- 4 In general, companies are dishonest in their dealings with customers.
- 5 In general, businesses who offer product and service guarantees will honor them. (reverse scored)
- 6 In general, most companies care nothing about the customer.

Self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.90$, $CR = 0.89$, $AVE = 0.59$)

- 1 On the whole I am satisfied with myself. (reverse scored)
- 2 I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.
- 3 I feel that I am person of worth, at least on an equal level to others. (reverse scored)
- 4 I take a positive attitude towards myself. (reverse scored).
- 5 At times I think that I am no good at all.
- 6 I wish that I could have more respect for myself.

Layout and design ($\alpha = 0.91$, $CR = 0.85$, $AVE = 0.55$)

- 1 The interior of the outlet was designed to my taste. (reverse scored)
- 2 It was very crowded inside of the outlet.
- 3 The interior design of the outlet was unpleasant.
- 4 It was very cramped inside of the outlet.
- 5 It was easy to move around the outlet. (reverse scored)

Atmospherics ($\alpha = 0.91$, $CR = 0.84$, $AVE = 0.57$)

- 1 The temperature inside of the outlet was pleasant. (reverse scored)
- 2 The music inside of the outlet was too loud.
- 3 The air quality inside of the outlet was poor.
- 4 The outlet was very clean. (reverse scored)

Fellow customers ($\alpha = 0.94$, $CR = 0.90$, $AVE = 0.60$)

- 1 Fellow customers behaved in a pleasant manner. (reverse scored)
- 2 Fellow customers behaved in a way that I was not expecting.
- 3 I enjoyed being around the other customers in the outlet. (reverse scored)
- 4 Fellow customers conducted themselves in a manner that I did not find appropriate.
- 5 Fellow customers behaved in a way that I found to be unpleasant.
- 6 Fellow customers behaved in a way that I did not agree with.

Exterior environment ($\alpha = 0.94$, $CR = 0.89$, $AVE = 0.62$)

- 1 The exterior of the outlet was unappealing.
- 2 The outlet was located in a nice area. (reverse scored)
- 3 The outside of the outlet did not look well maintained.
- 4 The exterior of the outlet looked run down.
- 5 The exterior of the outlet looked attractive. (reverse scored)

Crowding ($\alpha = 0.97$, $CR = 0.87$, $AVE = 0.76$)

- 1 The outlet was overcrowded.
- 2 The outlet was restrictive.
- 3 The outlet was cramped.

Perceptions of employee service ($\alpha = 0.96$, $CR = 0.92$, $AVE = 0.65$)

- 1 I was very dissatisfied with the way that the employee treated me.
- 2 The employee gave me no reason to trust them.
- 3 I was very dissatisfied with the employee's ability to satisfy my needs.
- 4 I was very dissatisfied with the employee's ability to help me.
- 5 The employee appeared to be very unenthusiastic.
- 6 The employee behaved in a manner that I found unacceptable.

Loyalty intentions ($\alpha = 0.93$, $CR = 0.88$, $AVE = 0.60$)

- 1 I intend to use this company more in the future.
- 2 I am very likely to recommend this service outlet to a friend.
- 3 As long as the present standard of service continues, I would use this service outlet again.
- 4 I intend to use this service outlet less in the future (reverse scored)
- 5 I consider this service outlet to be my first choice.

Severity of dysfunctional customer behavior ($\alpha = 0.91$, $CR = 0.84$, $AVE = 0.57$)

- 1 If others had witnessed my behavior, they would have thought it was inappropriate behavior within that specific outlet.
- 2 In hindsight, I acknowledge that my behavior is not what is expected of customers within that service outlet.
- 3 I believe that others would generally view my behavior as acceptable in today's society. (reverse scored)

- 4 If others had witnessed my behavior, they would have thought it was acceptable behavior within that specific outlet. (reverse scored)

Perceived opportunity ($\alpha = 0.86$, CR = 0.82, AVE = 0.55)

- 1 I planned to behave in this way.
- 2 I behaved in this way on 'impulse'.
- 3 My behavior was a reaction to a situation.
- 4 I reacted to an opportunity.
- 5 I thought about doing this behavior before I did it.

Perceived risk ($\alpha = 0.80$, CR = 0.78, AVE = 0.52)

- 1 I thought that this behavior was totally risk free.
- 2 I thought that I was unlikely to be apprehended for behaving in this way.
- 3 I thought that my behavior was risky.

Social desirability ($\alpha = 0.89$, CR = 0.82, AVE = 0.54)

- 1 It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
- 2 There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
- 3 No matter who I am talking to, I am always a good listener.
- 4 I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. (reverse scored)

Seven-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

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Executive summary and implications for managers and executives

This summary has been provided to allow managers and executives a rapid appreciation of the content of this article. Those with a particular interest in the topic covered may then read the article in toto to take advantage of the more comprehensive description of the research undertaken and its results to get the full benefits of the material present.

We see notices in all sorts of places these days – including hotels, restaurants and trains – saying that anti-social behavior towards staff will not be tolerated. Why on earth do we need signs telling people that they ought not to swear at, hit, or abuse in other ways the people who are there to help provide a service? Why indeed – but we do. Uncivil and aggressive behaviors during a service exchange, although often illegal, are increasingly commonplace. There was a time when front-line service employees were told to adopt such views as "the customer is king" or "the customer is always right". Nowadays they also have to be aware that the customer might shout, swear, or worse or just be looking for an excuse to write a letter of complaint in the hope of financial gain.

And not only do dysfunctional (bad, deviant, misbehaving – call them what you will) customers cause distress to the employee who is unlucky enough to be in their line of fire, the business might be damaged (if not physically) by a good

employee's decision to call it a day and work somewhere else, or customers who have witnessed the unpleasantness deciding to take their business elsewhere in future.

In an effort to discover why individual customers misbehave Kate L. Daunt and Lloyd C. Harris asked them. And in "Motives of dysfunctional customer behavior: an empirical study" they also aim to find out how differently-motivated misbehaviors are distinguished by personality/servicescape/situation-specific and demographic variables. The survey of customers revealed three differing motives for their dysfunctional customer – to which the following labels were attached:

- 1 Financial egotists.
- 2 Money grabbers.
- 3 Ego revengers.

There were, however, a range of variances across these motives and between categories.

Not surprisingly, dysfunctional customers come in a variety of guises. Those motivated by financial gain include shoplifters and those involved in illegitimate complaining behavior including fraudulent "returners". Then there are those with an "ego gain" motive prompted by a need for self-worth. Verbal abuse, sexual predatory behavior and property abuse are included in their misbehaviors, as is shoplifting or encouraging others to steal. Some people have "revenge" motives – a desire to "punish" or "pay back" an organization or member of staff because of a grievance. Verbally and physically aggressive consumer behaviors are frequently motivated by the offender's need to retaliate.

Significant differences were found between all servicescape and situation-specific variables across each of the three motives for misbehavior. This finding is especially profound as many of the variables are controllable and can be manipulated by the organization while the remaining variables are partially controllable. In this sense, while it is easy to dismiss customer misbehavior as unpredictable, this study finds that the motives for such misbehaviors vary according to managerially-controllable servicescape and situation-specific variables.

In this regard, such variables might be influenced by astute manipulation. For example, crowded, dirty, stuffy, and rundown environments are linked with differently motivated misbehaviors. Thus, managers should ensure that servicescapes are designed and constructed to ensure suitable ventilation, layout functionality and desirable patronage density. Thereafter, servicescape maintenance to foster customers' perceptions of hygienic, cared-for, and comfortable environmental surroundings appear important in managing episodes of customer misbehavior.

Building on the rudiments of good servicescape design, the study also highlights the importance of customer-to-firm and customer-to-customer compatibility. In this sense, in attempting to dispel incidents of customer misbehavior, service managers should ensure a good degree of coherency between the design of the servicescape and the characteristics and wants of target consumers. Compatibility should also be sought between employees' personalities and abilities and the traits and needs of desired customers. Visible personnel and electronic-based security systems might also help in successfully reducing perceived opportunities to misbehave.

The findings clearly indicate that the personality of customers varies in relation to their motives for misbehavior. While it might not be possible to control such

personality variables either by service personnel or consumers themselves, the knowledge that different personality characteristics are associated with particular motivations has implications for frontline personnel. Training them to recognize particular personality characteristics could prove an effective means of identifying individuals likely to be motivated to act in a particular way.

Such an approach might influence employees' interaction styles with such people, thus reducing the occurrence of misbehavior or minimizing the escalation and impact of such incidents. For example, identified aggressive personalities might be soothed by a calm and courteous employee, while

alienated consumers might be pacified by an employee with a personally attentive and caring manner.

Employees are customers, customers are employees, and both parties are actors in society. Thus, a deterioration of behavior perpetuates into a broader societal context. In this sense, local and national government education initiatives that promote social norms, indicating the wider and long-term consequences of such undesirable behavior, is warranted.

(A précis of the article "Motives of dysfunctional customer behavior: an empirical study". Supplied by Marketing Consultants for Emerald.)