

Customer Misbehavior in Retail Sector: Indian Prospective

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ABSTRACT:

Customer misbehavior in retail refers to any intentional or unintentional action by customers that disrupts the normal functioning of the store, negatively affecting employees, other customers or the overall shopping experience. This study investigates customer misbehavior in the Indian retail sector and focuses on its disruptive effects on store operations, employees, co-customers and overall shopping experiences. Using a mixed-method research design, the research integrated quantitative and qualitative data from 300 participants including 70 managers, 130 employees and 100 co-customers in 35 top urban retail stores in the fashion, grocery and electronics segments. The findings suggest that customer misbehavior, influenced by specific cultural, economic and social factors in India, significantly increased stress and frustration among employees. The study highlights the importance of effective communication and proactive management strategies to mitigate these negative effects, which will ultimately lead to enhanced employee well-being, customer loyalty, and service quality in India's competitive retail market. This analysis fills an important gap in the literature by focusing on customer misbehavior in the Indian context and provides practical insights to improve retail management practices.

Keywords: Customer Misbehavior, Co-customers, Employee, Retail Sector, Shopping Experience, Shopping

Introduction

The Indian retail industry has grown rapidly over the past few years due to changing customer needs, market growth, and increasing competition. However, with the positive changes in the retail sector, customer misbehavior has become a matter of concern over the past few years. Customer abuse can be described as activities that violate agreed standards, rules, or norms within a retail setting, resulting in unfortunate consequences, including saying hurtful words or phrases, not following the set norms, rules, or procedures of the business, and customers being irritable and stubborn (Harris, L. C., & Reynolds 2004). The influence of customer misbehavior is crucial due to the high exposure of these behaviors to front-line employees. Hence, frequent interaction with such rude or aggressive customers may expose an employee to stress, emotional exhaustion, and decreased job satisfaction. These phenomena affected mainly the employees working with a large number of customers, because the more customers he or she services the more likely such employees are to feel un-adequate situations or personal threats (Bhattacharjee and Purohit 2021; Mayer et al. 2022). In addition, managers face increased job demands as they have to manage the system resolve disputes, and keep customers satisfied. Should co-customers observe these behaviors or be affected by them in some way, they may feel uncomfortable, and irritated and, as a result, co-customers may have a poor shopping experience (Porath, C. L., & Erez 2007). Customer misbehavior in the retail sector is a serious issue that affects employees and their employers in many ways, although it has been studied to a lesser extent previously in the Indian context. This study will review how customer misbehavior affects employees in terms of service quality, job attitudes, and relationships with management, and how this experience affects co-customers in the Indian retail sector.

Due to factors including urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and technology developments that facilitate both online and offline buying, the retail industry in India has been growing. One issue in the industry that many of its participants ignore is customer misbehavior. While many beneficial changes have affected the targeted sector, there are still situations when retail customers indulge in behavior that is detrimental to the industry in many ways. On the one hand, similar misbehavior can manifest in many forms, including theft and verbal abuse, as well as slightly subtle instances when customers' behavior becomes extremely disruptive. Namely, growing impatience, as well as a lack of respect for other customers and personnel, fall under the category of customer misbehavior. On the other hand, its effects should not be overlooked, as they not only tarnish the reputation of a particular organization or chain, but also have a detrimental effect on the emotional and mental state of the organization's employees and, therefore, on the experience other customers receive. Thus, the issue of customer misbehavior and its effects should be considered in relation to the current situation and recent developments in the industry (Danatzis, Möller-Herm, and Herm 2024; Schaefers et al. 2016).

Frontline staff members are the most visible employees of a retail establishment; therefore they are usually the victims of misbehavior by customers. These employees make sure that everything runs smoothly and that customers are happy.

However, unpleasant or even hostile customers have a tendency to infuriate employees of their work, and unfortunately, these people are not rare. Over time, constant exposure to such behavior leads to burnout, emotional exhaustion and a drastic decrease in job satisfaction. High employee turnover rates are responsible for significant issues in retail organizations, as it often leads to feeling undervalued, stressed and discouraged; people feel they can be easily replaced and it is difficult to retain qualified people (Huang, Lin, and Wen 2010; Srivastava, Jayasimha, and Sivakumar 2022). Managers are not immune from the consequences of such customer behavior, even though they are usually not the direct victims of the abuse. They may need to mediate employee-customer conflict, taking responsibility for finding an expedient solution. Supervisors often have to try to balance the competing demands of the employee and his employer, a task that must be accomplished simultaneously and diplomatically. Their relationship with the abusive customer requires managers to act quickly and decisively, which may delay their other duties. This includes the implementation and refinement of development plans and the improvement of operations. In addition supervisors have to deal with the generally decreased morale and productivity of the team, caused by the misbehavior of their customers and exacerbated by existing pressures.

Another often neglected category of customers, i.e. those who witness the abuse but are not directly involved, called co-customers, are victims. The presence of an abusive customer can significantly diminish the shopping experience of these individuals. They may begin to feel uncomfortable, stressed, or unsafe in the store, causing them to leave the store prematurely, spend less money, and avoid returning to the store in the future. With customer satisfaction being recognized as a critical component for the growth of retailers in this industry, anything that disrupts the shopping experience for the customers is bound to have a lasting impact on the store. Despite the ample research conducted on the issue of customer misbehavior in the Western retail context, there is a noticeable dearth of knowledge regarding its impact on the Indian context (Chaouali et al. 2022; Echeverri, Salomonson, and Åberg 2012; Fan and Wang 2022; Guo et al. 2023). It is vital to take into account the cultural differences between the two contexts to understand the effects of misbehavior. For instance, in India, customer expectations of service or interpersonal behavior may be quite different from those in the Western world. It is also worth noting that the presence of both organized and unorganized retail in India can help acquire in-depth knowledge about the issue.

Many Indian customers still prefer unorganized retail trade, and they find this retail trade more customer-friendly. In any case, customers may not consider their response to poor service as disproportionate, as they feel that what kind of interaction they should expect at the store as a paying customer is fair. Thus, this research study will facilitate the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the problem and provide unique solution options. The research study will draw from both primary and secondary data, the first collected through customer surveys and the second from sources such as Google Scholar, newspapers, and magazines. Customers often visit more than one store to buy their goods. Therefore, any intervention that a store takes to combat customer misbehavior will make the store more attractive and increase its sales. Thus, the benefits are not limited; customers, store managers, and employees all benefit equally.

Literature Review

Customer misbehavior is a topic of interest in the retail industry, especially in a developing country like India, where the retail sector is one of the largest employers. It refers to a wide range of behaviors including harsh words, assaults and brawls among customers, unruly behavior, and uncooperative behavior displayed in public. Its consequences are very serious and are not limited to just financial losses for the business. It also results in psychological and emotional consequences for customer-facing employees and their managers and also unsettles co-customers present at the scene. The literature collected on this subject surveys the antecedents, triggers, and consequences in various settings, and assesses the impact of such behavior in motivating employees to engage in incivility or even take revenge. Taking into account this emerging series of studies, this paper highlights the executive summaries of selected papers, and attempts to provide a detailed understanding of how retail business in India is affected by this behavior as per the global literature available on the subject.

In the services industry, misbehavior by customers is becoming more common these days (Bhattacharjee and Purohit 2021). The hazards of working as a contact center executive, instances of verbal or physical abuse directed at service staff, and abnormal customer behavior like stealing by patrons in retail establishments are all well-known yet hardly covered. In reality, many businesses that strive to live up to the maxim "customer is king" fall prey to improper behavior on the part of their clientele. Every firm deals with customer misbehavior in one way or another, but the subject is still seldom studied in the context of emerging markets. This paper's conclusions are derived from a nationwide qualitative investigation of customer misbehavior using semi-structured interviews. They are sharing the results from 24 of these interviews. They put forth a conceptual framework that could serve as the foundation for confirming research in this field of consumer studies in the future. The study conducted by Sharron J. Lennon et al. (Lennon, Johnson, and Lee 2011) on "A Perfect Storm for Consumer Misbehavior: Shopping on Black Friday". Authors collect data on Black Friday (BF) shopping to develop a questionnaire, to look at possible relationships between the factors found, and to make recommendations for further research using a variety of theoretical viewpoints. According to a survey conducted among

BF consumers, those who thought they had to put in extra effort to plan and shop on BF were more likely to act out. Also, they discovered that BF shoppers who put a lot of work into organizing and carrying out their BF shopping also tended to have high trait impulsivity scores. Although it may seem contradictory, those who carefully plan for BF often mentally organize their activities and seize unexpected opportunities. Our findings support the generic aggression concept, which explains customer misconduct during BF events.

Daunt and Harris (Daunt and Harris 2011) examined various types of bad customer behavior (DCB) within the hospitality industry, which provides a valuable framework for understanding similar behavior in the retail environment. Their research identifies DCB as a multidimensional construct that includes acts such as verbal abuse, property damage, and disregard for store policies. The findings suggest that such behaviors not only disrupt service but also lead to emotional distress and burnout in employees, which is consistent with studies from other sectors such as retail (Daunt and Harris 2011). Harris and Reynolds (Harris and Reynolds 2003) similarly explored the antecedents of customer misbehavior, finding that personal factors such as stress and service dissatisfaction can often trigger negative actions. In the retail sector, frontline employees bear the brunt of such behaviors, which can lead to low job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and reduced performance (Grandey, Dickter, and Sin 2004). Their studies show that frequent exposure to customer aggression can increase employee turnover and lead to poor service quality. In addition, co-customers who witness such misbehavior are also affected. According to Daunt and Greer (Daunt, K. L., & Greer 2021b), witnessing aggressive or rude behavior can worsen a customer's perception of the store's atmosphere, making them less likely to return. The contagion effect of witnessing negative behavior has also been shown to create a more hostile environment, which further increases employee dissatisfaction (Mehata 2020). The psychological effects of customer misbehaviors are far-reaching and extend beyond the immediate instability in the service settings. In their study, van Jaarsveld et al. (Van Jaarsveld, D. D., Walker, D. D., & Skarlicki 2010) sought to investigate how being exposed to "insane" or savage customers influenced the employees' work involving their sense of personal accomplishment and self-worth. This is meant to mean that when employees are repeatedly exposed to such behaviors, they might learn to absorb them and they become less motivated and as such experience decreased self-efficacy.

Market researchers have long observed that consumers typically act in a compliant and reasonable manner while making purchases, utilizing, and discarding goods and services (Solomon et al. 1985). However, it is observed that the number of misbehaving consumers is rising quickly, primarily during service interactions (Fullerton, R.A. and Punj 1997). A more accurate definition of consumer misbehavior would be characterized as actions taken by customers that violate generally accepted or applicable norms of conduct in a variety of consuming contexts (Fullerton and Punj 1993). To manage the pressure of excessive emotional demand, the employees are most likely to switch to "surface acting" and present the corresponding aspect of their work experience incorrectly as a result, the sense of well-being among the staff will decrease (Grandey, A. A., Dickter, D. N., & Sin 2012). Apart from impacting the work of the employees, customer misbehavior can differ in terms of the scale and intensity of the reaction in terms of the cultural context within which the staff works. According to Kim and Qu (Kim, W. G., & Qu 2019), collectivist cultures, including countries in Asia, foster a greater amount of pressure on employees to suppress their emotional responses to customer misbehavior. Notably, because the latter tends to build up over time, it means that the conditions for employees' exposure to the consequences of customer misbehavior are much more affecting.

Managers are often faced with the task of resolving incidents of customer misbehavior, which can place a significant strain on their ability to maintain smooth operations and a positive work environment. Harris and Reynolds (Harris, L. C., & Reynolds 2004) established that managers in retail settings may be suffering from a sense of constant frustration and anxiety in the pacifying of both parties. On the other hand, there are also specific organizational policies that may be encouraging customer misbehavior. For example, Fisk et al. (Al. 2010) have identified that the mantra 'customer is always right' may encourage some customers to misbehave, knowing that the employees will have no recourse. In short, both employees and managers become disempowered and unable to enforce appropriate behavioral boundaries. In addition, the authors contend that many businesses fail to take customer satisfaction seriously and do not believe in employees' capabilities to improve service for customers (Daunt, K. L., & Greer 2021a). When it comes to manual hiring, businesses may be less attracted to the idea of improving customer service due to the apparent inefficiency of the efforts in attracting customers. However, there are still businesses that have already implemented the program with excellent results, whose success is based on a much wider range of tools that support customer satisfaction.

Lloyd and Harris (Lloyd, S. G., & Harris 2021) categorized customer abuse into several types: verbal abuse, physical aggression, violation of store policies, and fraud. Each type of abuse affects employees differently, with verbal abuse and aggression having the most severe psychological impact. In the retail sector, where personal contact is a core part of the job, these behaviors can disrupt the entire service delivery process and create an unsafe work environment. Table 1 summarizes the literature on customer misbehavior and its impact on frontline employees, managers, and co-customers.

Table 1: Explaining the literature by author name, year and the main finding of their study.

Author(s)	Year	Title	Finding
Daunt & Harris	2012	Customers acting badly: evidence from the hospitality industry	Explored how customer misbehavior negatively affects employees and co-customers in hospitality settings.
Daunt & Greer	2021	Witnessing customer misbehavior: Impacts on co-customers and environment	Highlighted the negative impact on co-customers and the shopping atmosphere caused by customer misbehavior.
Fisk et al.	2010	Customers behaving badly: A state of the art review	Reviewed the types of customer misbehavior and proposed future research agendas.
Grandey et al.	2012	The customer is not always right: Customer aggression and emotion regulation.	Found that dealing with aggressive customers leads to emotional labor and burnout among service employees.
Harris & Reynolds	2004	Jaycustomer behavior: An exploration of types and motives	Classified types of customer misbehavior and explored the motives behind such behaviors.
Kim & Qu	2019	Customers' aggressive behaviors and service employees' job performance	Identified the link between aggressive customer behavior and reduced job performance in service employees.
Lloyd & Harris	2007	The antecedents and consequences of dysfunctional customer behavior	Categorized types of customer misbehavior and examined their consequences on employees in service settings.
Mehta & Bansal	2020	Social and psychological impacts of customer misbehavior in India	Analyzed the psychological impacts of customer misbehavior on employees and co-customers in Indian retail.
Van Jaarsveld et al.	2010	The impact of customer incivility on service employees' performance	Showed that customer incivility affects employees' performance and reduces their motivation over time.
Anindo Bhattacharjee and Neha Purohit	2021	Consumer Misbehaviour in Services: A Qualitative Study in India	This paper's conclusions are derived from a qualitative national study on customer misbehavior using semi-structured interviews. They are sharing the results from 24 of these interviews. They put out a conceptual framework that can serve as the foundation for confirming research in this field of consumer studies in the future.
Lennon, Johnson, and Lee	2011	A Perfect Storm for Consumer Misbehavior: Shopping on Black Friday	Conducting qualitative interviews with consumers and retail staff regarding consumer misbehavior or engagement on BF may yield valuable insights. While customers were the main subject of this study, store employees with BF sales expertise could be the subject of the next research to gain a different viewpoint on customer misbehavior at BF. Finally, security cameras may have an impact on customer misbehavior on BF.

Research Gap:

Despite growing recognition of customer misbehavior and its harmful effects on frontline employees, managers and co-customers, there remains a significant gap in understanding its subtle effects within the Indian retail sector. Existing studies predominantly focus on Western contexts, leaving a limited exploration of how cultural, economic, and social factors in India influence the frequency, severity, and consequences of customer misbehavior also consumer misbehavior has been a highly important and acknowledged yet ignored topic by the researchers. Additionally, while much of the literature examines the impact on employees, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis of how such behavior affects co-customers' shopping experiences and the overall store environment. This gap calls for a more localized and holistic study, examining the interconnected effects on employees, managers, and co-customers in the Indian retail landscape.

Objectives:

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the impacts of Customer Misbehavior on frontline employees, managers, and co-customers in the retail sector in India. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Examine the effects of customer misbehavior on the emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and performance of retail employees and managers.
- Investigate how customer misbehavior affects co-customers’ shopping experiences and their perceptions of the overall store environment.
- Explore potential strategies employed by retail managers to mitigate the negative impacts of customer misbehavior on staff morale and customer satisfaction.

1. Methodology

This current study employ a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic understanding of customer misbehavior in the Indian retail sector. The research will be descriptive and exploratory, aiming to identify patterns, causes, and consequences of customer misbehavior, as well as retailer responses. The main aim of this research is to analyze the impacts of Customer Misbehavior on frontline employees, managers, and co-customers. The flow of work is mentioned in Figure 1.

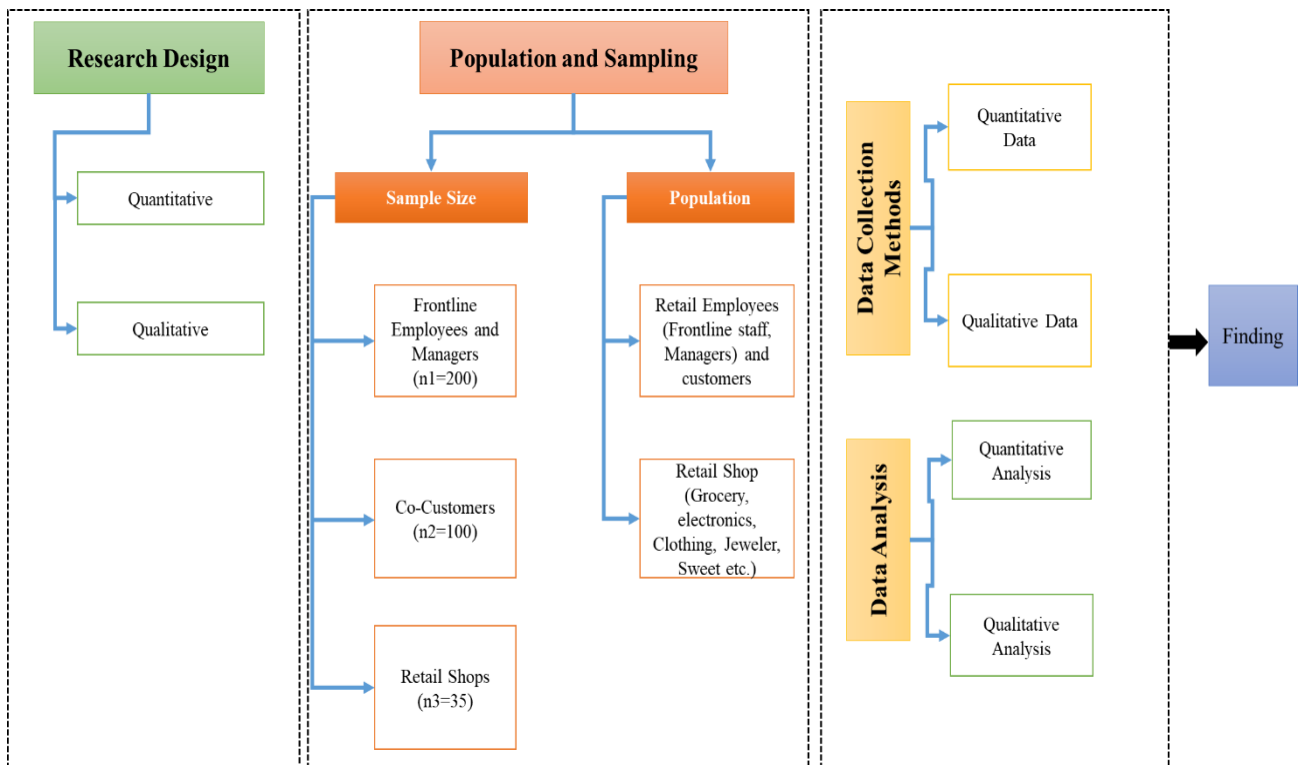


Figure 1: Representing the Flow chart of Research Methodology.

In this study collected secondary data via online sources (e. g., Google Scholar, news articles, and magazines,) from several legitimate websites. All studies were chosen based on the strict criterion that they included the concept of customer deviance, and how it influences both service agents in place (retail employees) as well as those under observation (co-customers). We only included sources that expanded on the effects of this behavior on a retail environment with research or in-depth analysis. This approach ensured that the literature review was congruent with the study's aims. Figure 2 illustrates the number of sources (articles, journal papers, books, etc.) that were selected giving an idea about how many which type of literature was used throughout this research.

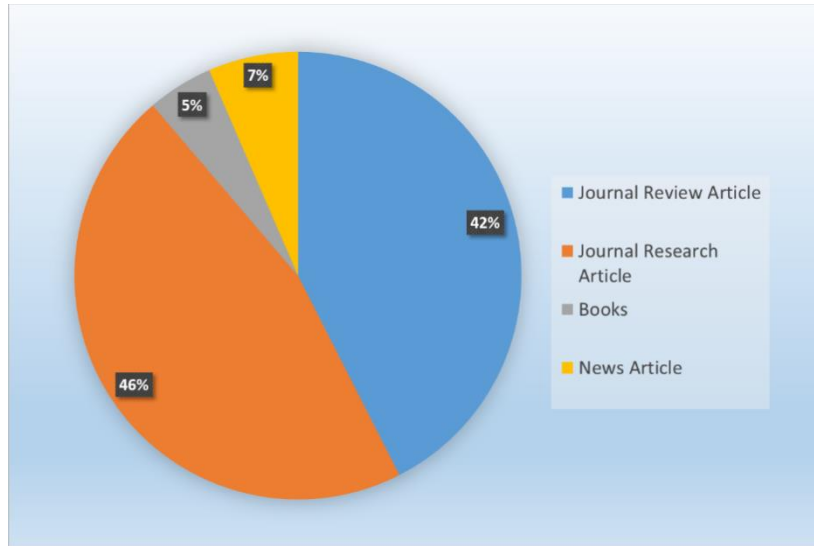


Figure 2: Illustrating the Secondary Data.

The study will only focus on the retail outlets across various segments like fashion, grocery, electronics, etc., and all these types of retail outlets selected from urban areas only. In this study, a random sampling technique is used to collect the data for analysis. For this study total of 300 samples were chosen of which 70 managers, 130 employees, and 100 co-customers were selected across different retail sectors. Also, 35 top retail outlets (Grocery, electronic, fashion, etc.) are selected as mentioned in Table 2. The Demographic profile (Gender, age group, etc.) of the respondent is mentioned in Table 3.

Table 2: Illustrating the Selected Retail Shops for this Study.

SI. No	Selected Retail Shop	Frequency	Co-Customer Selected	Employee & Manager
1	Fashion	13	25	50
2	Electronics	8	15	26
3	Grocery	10	35	89
4	Others	4	25	35
	Total	35	100	200

Table 3: Shows the Demographic Profile of the Respondent.

Demographic Profile	Categories	Respondents	Total
Gender	Male	185	300
	Female	115	
Age Group	18-25	115	300
	26-35	70	
	36-45	65	
	46-55	50	
Categories	Managers	70	200
	Employees	130	

Data Collection:

The survey aims to explore the problems of customer misbehavior and their effects on the work of both employees and co-customers from different angles. In particular, the frequency and severity of negative behaviors will be explored in employees and managers. Such behaviors include rudeness, aggression, unreasonable demands, and others. The survey aims to measure their impact on emotional well-being, i.e. the level of stress and frustration, as well as the impact of such behaviors on job satisfaction and performance. Likert scales and several other techniques will be used to measure such impacts, allowing participants to provide the exact intensity of the data required. Overall, this part of the survey provides information on how retail employee job performance and morale are reduced due to exposure to misbehaving customers. For customers, the objectives of the survey are focused on exploring how exposure to rude and misbehaving customers affects the shopping experience. In other words, participants in this segment of the survey would be co-customers of rude clients. The survey would aim to measure the level of uncomfortableness due to negative emotions in the encountered situation. Such an approach would attempt to answer the question of whether such situations affect the shopping experience negatively. Overall, involving all three groups in the survey and applying a 5-point Likert scale would provide a detailed and multi-level understanding of the emergence of misbehavior and its effects on the working and shopping

environment, as mentioned in Table 4. Each of the responses taken as a 'agree' is assigned a significant number which is used for analysis (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 4: Customer Misbehavior and Its Impact on Retail Employees and Managers

FACTORS	QUESTIONS	AVERAGE (N=200) \bar{x}	Mean of Mean (\bar{x})
Stress Due to Customer Misbehavior	I often feel stressed after dealing with difficult or misbehaving customers.	4.065	4.05
	Dealing with customer misbehavior makes my job more mentally exhausting.	4.005	
	I feel anxious when I anticipate a confrontation with a misbehaving customer.	4	
Frustration Due to Customer Misbehavior	I often feel frustrated when customers behave in an unreasonable manner.	4.025	4.01
	Customer misbehavior disrupts my ability to provide good service to other customers.	4	
	It is frustrating when customer misbehavior goes unaddressed or unresolved.	4.02	
Job Dissatisfaction	Customer misbehavior reduces my overall job satisfaction.	4.095	4.08
	Frequent customer misbehavior makes me consider leaving my current position.	4.005	
	Customer misbehavior makes it difficult for me to feel fulfilled in my job.	4.12	
General Perceptions of Customer Misbehavior	Customer misbehavior is a common issue at my workplace.	4.14	4.15
	The frequency of customer misbehavior has increased over time.	4.13	
	Customer misbehavior is a significant challenge for employees in the retail industry.	4.1	
Impact on Co-Workers and Work Environment	When customers misbehave, it affects the morale of my co-workers.	4.26	4.26
	The behavior of difficult customers can create a negative atmosphere in the store.	4.095	
	Dealing with misbehaving customers affects the overall efficiency of my team.	4.07	

A survey was conducted among the co-customers to analyze their perception of the influence of customer misbehavior on the shopping experience and store atmosphere in general. Thus, n = 100 respondents (Co-customer) and their attitude towards seeing the misbehaving of people, their rudeness or aggression was measured. Their comfort was measured employing an analogous rating, and the different parameters, as well as scales, were used to measure their other emotions, like satisfaction in case of seeing the normal behavior of the people or, in contrast, discomfort or frustration in case of serious misbehaving, also its take Suggestions for Improvement from the co-customer that will help to enhance the customer misbehavior for the retail shop. Therefore, this study was aimed at analyzing the problem of customer and

frontline employee misbehavior and understanding whether such a change in shopping atmosphere could outweigh their perception of shopping and the attitude toward store management, as mentioned in Table 5.

Table 5: Shows the Answers Based on Questions Asked by Co-Customers about Customer Misbehavior and its Impact on Their Shopping Experience.

Factors	STATEMENT	Coded Responses	AVERAGE OF RESPONSES
Witnessing Customer Misbehavior	Have you ever witnessed customer misbehavior in retail stores?	Very Frequently=1 Frequently=2 Occasionally=3 Rarely=4 Never=5	1.06
	If yes, how often do you observe customer misbehavior during your shopping trips?	Very Frequently=1 Frequently=2 Occasionally=3 Rarely=4 Never=5	1.96
Impact of Customer Misbehavior on Shopping Experience	How does witnessing customer misbehavior affect your shopping experience?	Very Positively=1 Positively=2 Neutral=3 Negatively=4 Very Negatively=5	4.22
	Does customer misbehavior make you less likely to shop at that store again?	Strongly Agree=1 Agree=2 Neutral=3 Strongly Disagree=4 Disagree=5	2.11
General Shopping Experience	How often do you feel that customer misbehavior impacts your interactions with store employees?	Very Frequently=1 Frequently=2 Occasionally=3 Rarely=4 Never=5	2.13
	To what extent do you believe that customer misbehavior affects the shopping experience of other customers?	Very Much=1 Somewhat=2 Neutral=3 Not Much=4 Not at All=5	2.03
Suggestions for Improvement	To what extent do you agree with the following measures retail stores should take to reduce customer misbehavior? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stricter enforcement of store policies • Employee training on handling difficult customers • Improved communication with customers Increased security presence in the store	Strongly Disagree =1 Disagree=2 Neutral=3 Agree=4 Strongly Agree=5	4.36
	How important is it for you that retail stores actively address customer misbehavior?	Extremely Important=1	1.72

		Important=2 Neutral=3 Unimportant=4 Extremely Unimportant=5	
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Results & Discussion

The purpose of the survey would be to gauge the degree of discomfort brought on by unfavorable feelings in the met circumstance. Comprehensive and multi-level knowledge of the rise of misbehavior and its impacts on the working and shopping environments would be possible by including all three groups in the survey and using a 5-point Likert scale. Each term in the response was given a significant number that was utilized for analysis (1 being strongly disagree, 2 being disagree, 3 being neutral, 4 being agree, and 5 being strongly agree). Figure 3 shows the graph among questioners asked from employees and managers vs. their average answer, the details of the questions are mentioned in Table 4. Customer misbehavior and its impact on retail employees and managers are analyzed with the help of selecting different factors and the results of those factors are obtained with the help of set questions based on that question respondents' opinion is collected and that collected data is analyzed and results are obtained. For the first factor "stress due to customer misbehavior", an average proportion of about 4.05% of people agreed that customer inattention harms employees and managers, and they feel stress due to it. About the second factor "*Frustration due to customer misbehavior*" also most people on average 4.01 people agreed that customer misbehavior makes employees and managers frustrated. For the third factor "*Job dissatisfaction*", for the fourth factor "*General perception of customer misbehavior*", on average 4.15 respondents agree that customer misbehavior is a common issue, customer misbehavior has increased over time, customer misbehavior is a significant challenge for employees in the retail industry when customers misbehave it also affects the morale of colleagues (Figure 3).

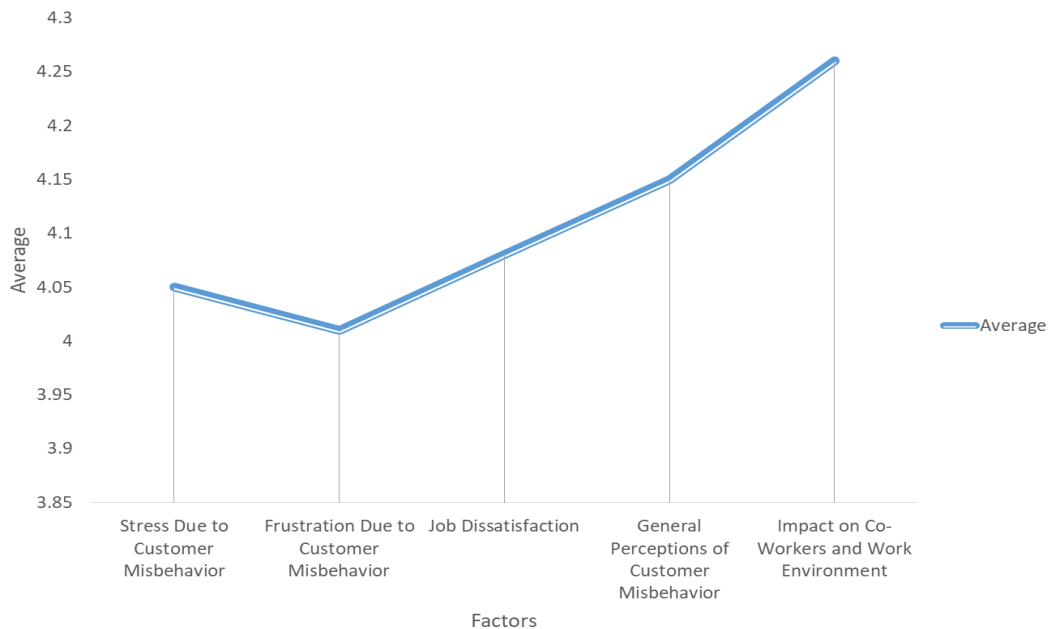


Figure 3: Graph between Average and Factors.

Co-customers evaluate how witnessing other customers' rude behavior has impacted their own shopping experience, and the results based on the data collected by co-customers. According to the first factor "*witnessing customer misbehavior*", most co-customers have witnessed customer misbehavior in retail stores on average 1.06, about 1.96 Average of respondents said they often witness customer misbehavior while shopping. The second factor is "the impact of customer misbehavior on the shopping experience", an average of 4.22 said customer misbehavior has a negative impact on the shopping experience, and an average of about 2.11 co-customers said that customer misbehavior reduces the likelihood of shopping at that store again. The third factor is "General Shopping Experience", an average of 2.13 co-customers responded that misbehavior affects interactions with store employees, and an average of 2.03 co-customers responded that customer misbehavior has an impact on other customers' shopping experience. The fourth factor is "Suggestions for Improvement", an average of about 4.36 co-customers responded that better communication with customers is needed to

deal with customer misbehavior, and an average of about 1.72 co-customers responded that it is important for retail stores to actively address customer misbehavior.

This comprehensive analysis of customer misbehavior within the retail sector from an Indian perspective has illuminated the multifaceted nature of customer deviance and its significant impact on both service agents and co-customers. By synthesizing a diverse array of secondary data from reputable online sources, we have identified key themes and trends that reveal how customer misbehavior affects the retail environment. The reviewed literature emphasizes that customer deviance not only disrupts the service experience for employees but also creates a ripple effect that affects other shoppers. Retail employees face stress and job dissatisfaction when dealing with the challenges posed by difficult customers. Also, co-customers often experience discomfort or dissatisfaction due to the negative atmosphere created by such behaviors, which may reduce loyalty and lead to a poorer shopping experience overall. Our findings highlight the need for retail management to implement effective strategies to reduce customer misbehavior. Training programs for employees, clear policies for managing deviant behaviors, and promoting a positive shopping atmosphere can collectively enhance the retail experience. Furthermore, the insights gained from this study can serve as a basis for future research, encouraging in-depth exploration of customer psychology and the dynamics of retail interactions.

Addressing Customer Misbehavior in the Indian Retail Sector

To effectively address customer misbehavior in the Indian retail sector, implementing comprehensive employee training programs is crucial. These programs should focus on conflict resolution, communication skills, and stress management, equipping staff with the tools necessary to handle difficult situations more effectively. Employees can reduce the stress and dissatisfaction they feel at work by creating a place of support. This could include establishing a set of policies to follow in considering what behavior is acceptable in stores. These rules could be clearly printed or posted for the customers to see, and they could be supported by oral instructions the employees are to give to buyers that do not adhere to the standards. In this way, all interested parties will know what they can expect and what behavior is to be tolerated, thereby effectively preventing most forms of rude behavior. Such a customer code of conduct regarding an acceptable form of behavior could be complemented by a positive shopping environment. Retailers should up the number of friendliness-inducing design within the stores and the degree of attention paid toward explaining or examining the products. This customer-oriented shopping atmosphere makes rude behavior less prevalent of a problem circumvented and less likely to occur. This is further strengthened by new customer feedback forms used by the retailers to view the effectiveness of these measures, and the enhanced surveillance to directly prevent standoffs. Close monitoring of the situation and incentivizing employees to report potential sources of rudeness will lead to both closes relationships and distress reduction.

This in-depth examination of consumer abuse in the Indian retail business gives vital new insights on the complicated ways in which customer abuse impacts front-line staff, managers, and other consumers. This study effectively combines quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the origins, patterns, and impacts of customer abuse, as well as merchants' reactions, utilizing a mixed-methods research technique. Results demonstrate that client abuse has a considerable detrimental influence on the well-being of managers and personnel working in retail companies. This influence is reflected in greater levels of tension (mean score 4.05) and irritation (mean score 4.01). The results indicate a troubling pattern: workers regard customer mistreatment as a chronic and developing problem that adversely effects their job satisfaction and general morale at work (mean score 4.15). These results underscore how crucial it is for organizations to create robust training efforts and reward systems to empower staff with the skills they need to tackle stressful client scenarios. Co-customers' experiences indicate to a similar harmful influence on the retail environment. A large percentage of participants reported that they regularly encounter improper conduct from customers (average score 1.96), which adversely impacts their whole shopping experience (average score 4.22). This indicates that these acts not only lower consumer satisfaction, but also reduce the possibility that customers would return to the impacted companies.

The study also highlights potential strategies for improving. Co-customers emphasized the importance of better communication with customers and active measures to address misbehavior (average scores of 2.36 and 1.72, respectively). These findings point to a need for retailers to foster a more positive shopping atmosphere, which may enhance customer loyalty and employee morale. Addressing customer misbehavior is essential for the success of retail operations in India. By recognizing the detrimental effects on employees and the shopping experience, retailers can take proactive steps to cultivate a healthier environment for all stakeholders involved. This analysis not only enriches the understanding of customer deviance in retail but also offers actionable insights that can guide future research and retail management practices. This analysis not only contributes to the existing body of literature but also offers practical implications for retailers aiming to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction in the competitive Indian market.

Future Direction in the Field of Customer Misbehavior

As the development of consumer rights and expectations takes place, the retailers in India have no choice but to adapt to the emerging behavioral and demand shifts. Although misbehavior on the part of the customers may also become more

prominent, it is important to take the necessary measures so that the existing service standards stay at a high level and inappropriate behaviors are addressed properly. To ensure this, a carefully designed approach to customer service should be adopted. Specifically, the approach implies that not only should retail staff be trained in detecting potential sources of conflict and resolve it, but the necessary learning opportunities should be created for supporting retail staff and developing a respectful treatment environment internally. In addition, on the part of the retailers, the regular analysis of consumer practices and preferences is important so that relevant measures can be applied proactively. Speaking of the tools that can be used by the retailers to adapt to the misuse of retail services by consumers, it should be mentioned that artificial intelligence can be used to track and analyze the relevant trends in customer activity. Similarly, data analytics can be used to study the irregularities in customer behavior and thus help develop a set of strategies that will diminish the levels of misbehavior.

The emergence of e-commerce as a competitive technology is a complicating factor which should not be overlooked. Since there might be patterns of behavior intrinsic to e-commerce specifically, the corresponding trends in physical retail should also be studied. In addition, the culturally accepted practices may also evolve with time and more consumers may decide to act in certain increasingly common ways. Therefore, the policies on what is an allowable customer behavior should be adjusted to suit the reality of the day. Finally, since customer interactions are invariably linked to the well-being of the employees and retailers are often subjected to mental health pressure related to them, the problem of retailer work-related mental health. Providing emotional support for the employees should be a primary concern because such an environment is supportive of employees and helping them to maintain customer-friendly attitudes regardless of the situation, thus extending the professional move of business assistance to the shops.

Conclusion

Customer misbehavior is a pervasive problem in the Indian retail sector that has a huge impact on employees, managers and co-customers. The results are significant: customer misbehavior increases stress and frustration of retail employees, as well as reduces job satisfaction, which has a huge impact on morale. Continuous misbehavior of customers spoils the shopping environment for co-customers as well. The findings highlight the importance of these targeted interventions for retailers – improved communication, intensive training of employees and efforts to create an overall more pleasant shopping environment. Such efforts are imperative to improve the consumer experience, enhance employee well-being and make retail business sustainable in India.

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