

HOW DOES JAY-CUSTOMER AFFECT EMPLOYEE JOB STRESS AND JOB  
SATISFACTION?

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Guest-contact employees interact with various types of customers, and they are often exposed to stressful conditions caused by the deviant, or jay-customers. The purpose of this study is to examine how jay-customer behaviors (customer incivility and customer aggression) affect employees' job stress, and consequently, job satisfaction. Surveys of 210 participants, currently working as guest-contact employees in the hospitality industry, were analyzed for the study. The results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses show a positive relationship between the experience of customer incivility and employees' job stress. Additionally, the results indicate a full mediation effect of employees' job stress on the relationship between customer incivility and employees' job satisfaction. Unfortunately, the study was not able to analyze customer aggression, because the majority of the participants did not report customer aggression. The findings of this study make a contribution to the hospitality service management literature by providing empirical evidence of customer incivility and its negative impact on guest-contact employees. Hospitality managers should acknowledge the existence of jay-customer behaviors and recognize their significant impact on employees' job stress and job satisfaction.

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality companies build their reputation for service excellence by treating customers with respect and commitment. That requires a service culture in which service employees themselves are treated with respect and commitment (Berry & Seiders, 2008). Management practices that permit customers to behave badly (e.g., verbally abusing employees, creating a disturbance) in the name of “customer service” can undermine the service excellence spirit (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Fullerton & Punj, 2004). Most research assumes that customers behave in a manner that is rational and functional (e.g., Kennedy, Goolsby, & Arnold, 2003; Singh & Ranchhod, 2003). However, this assumption conflicts with contemporary research that demonstrates that deviant or norm-breaking customer behaviors not only exist, but are commonplace (e.g., Fullerton & Punj, 1993; Harris & Reynolds, 2004; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998; Shamir, 1980). “Jay-customer” refers to the customers who deliberately or unintentionally disrupt service in a manner that negatively affects the firms, employees, and other customers (Loverlock, 1994).

Some jay-customer behaviors are subtle, and the intention to harm an employee is unclear. For example, hostile or unpleasant customers who do not respect a service provider may exhibit uncivil behaviors that interfere with the work rhythm of service employees (Dormann & Zapf, 2004), and such behaviors are viewed, at least in part, as dysfunctional (Reynolds & Harris, 2009). On the other hand, some other customers may exhibit aggressive behavior, such as physical violence or threats toward service employees (Boyd, 2002; Rose & Neidermeyer, 1999; Dube, 2003).

Previous research discussed the existence of jay-customer behaviors in service encounters (e.g., Harris & Reynolds, 2004; Loverlock, 1994); however, there is a lack of research in regard to its effect on service employees. In the hospitality industry, guest-contact employees interact with various types of customers, and they are often exposed to stressful conditions caused by jay-customers (Reynolds & Harris, 2005). When the common training and policy place an emphasis on guests always being right, handling jay-customers can be especially challenging for guest-contact employees. Past research suggests that interactions with customers are frequently found to be a source of stress for guest-contact employees in the workplace (Frone, 2000; Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2002; Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002; Spector & Jex, 1998), and stress from these social interactions has a significant impact on guest-contact employees' burnout and job dissatisfaction (Maslach, 1982). Denying the existence and impact of jay-customers can threaten great service companies, hence, companies should acknowledge jay-customers' misbehaviors and deal with them effectively (Berry & Seiders, 2008).

### ***Purpose of Study***

The purpose of this study is to examine how jay-customer behaviors affect guest-contact employees. Specifically, this study focuses on the two types of jay-customer behaviors, customer incivility and customer aggression, and their impact on employees' job stress and job satisfaction.

### ***Significance of the Research***

The theoretical contribution of this study would be to provide a better understanding of jay-customer behavior and its impact on guest-contact employees. While some research has

investigated the types and motivators of jay-customer behavior, there is a lack of research on its effect on guest-contact employees. By examining two types of jay-customer behavior, customer incivility and customer aggression, this study can broaden the knowledge of customer misbehaviors and their relation to employees' job stress and job satisfaction. This study may help service organizations to reduce employee job stress caused by jay-customers. Also, the findings of this study can provide suggestions for service managers in developing procedures, such as employee training programs, to deal with jay-customers.

### ***Organization***

The following sections consist of chapter two to five. Chapter two includes relevant literature discussions and hypotheses. Chapter three provides detailed information regarding the methodology employed in this study. Chapter four discusses the results of the data analysis, including the hypotheses' test results. Chapter five provides theoretical and managerial implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature. First, jay-customer behaviors are explained and two types of jay-customer behaviors, customer incivility and customer aggression, are discussed. Next, the chapter provides discussions on employee job stress and how it is related to jay-customer behavior. Finally, employee job satisfaction is discussed and the conceptual model is proposed.

### *Jay-customers*

Hospitality organizations are usually expected to fulfill the demands of the customer to achieve profitability and market growth (Drucker, 1954; Levitt, 1960), and employees are usually expected to do anything to make their customers satisfied (Lovelock & Witz, 2007). Although most previous consumer behavior research has been conducted based on the assumption that customers behave rationally and functionally (e.g., Kennedy, Goolsby, & Arnold, 2003; Singh & Ranchhod, 2003), researchers note that some customers deliberately violate widely-held norms in service exchanges (Best & Luckenbill 1994). Since many hospitality companies have dedicated considerable attention to customers' perceptions of service quality, these companies may provide opportunities for customers to misbehave to exploit customer-oriented service providers (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Harris & Reynolds, 2004).

“Jay-customers” are defined as customers who “act in a thoughtless or abusive way, causing problems for the firm, its employees, and other customers” (Lovelock, 2001, p.73). Bitner, Booms, and Mohr (1994) describe “problem customers” as unwilling to cooperate with the service provider, other customers, industry regulations, and/ or laws (p.98). These type of customers have been variously referred as “aberrant customers” (Fullerton & Punj, 1993),

“deviant consumers” (Moschis & Cox, 1989), “misbehaving customers” (Tonglet, 2001), “dysfunctional customers” (Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Fisk et al., 2010), and “unfair customers” (Berry & Seiders, 2008).

Jay-customer behaviors are generally described as a violation of socially-constructed standards or target-constructed judgments (Fisk et al., 2010). For example, Fullerton and Punj (1993) describe aberrant customer behavior as customer behaviors or acts that violate generally accepted norms of conduct in service exchange settings. On the other hand, Lovelock (2001) discusses jay-customers from a harm-related viewpoint, and describes them as customers who deliberately or unintentionally disrupt service in a manner that negatively affects firms, employees, and other customers (Lovelock, 1994).

There is a stream of research that focuses on identifying drivers of customer misbehaviors (e.g., Yi & Gong, 2006). For example, Fullerton and Punj (1993) suggest that customer misbehavior is driven by psychological, demographic, and social influences. Psychological factors that drive customers’ misbehavior include personality traits, attitudes, the extent of moral development, aspiration fulfillment, the desire for thrill seeking, and aberrant psychological dispositions (Kats, 1988; Pfohl, 1985; Ward & Robertson, 1973). Demographic characteristics such as age, sex, education, and economic status also could be drivers of the misbehavior of jay-customers (Fullerton & Punj, 1993). Researchers also detected a variety of group-level issues, including socialization, norm formation, and peer pressure as social influences (Cohen, 1966; Moschis & Cox, 1989).

Reynolds and Harris (2005) focused on illegitimate customer complainers who purposely feign and manipulate their dissatisfaction to get benefit from that activity. They identified six motives of illegitimate customer complaints: freeloaders, fraudulent returners, fault

transferors, solitary ego gainers, peer-induced esteem seekers, and disruptive gainers (Reynolds & Harris, 2005). In the context of customer cheating behavior, Wirtz and Kum (2004) suggested that unethical consumer behavior is driven by two main elements, personality and situational factors, and their interactions. Personality factors include introversion and extroversion, while situational factors include potential material gain, rewards and benefits, opportunity, perceived injustice, external pressure, and dissatisfaction with the relationship (Wirtz & Kum, 2004).

Classifications of jay-customers and their behaviors have been discussed by both researchers and practitioners (e.g., Berry & Seiders, 2008; Lovelock, 2001; Yagil, 2008; Zemke & Anderson, 1990). Lovelock (2001) describes jay-customers as thieves, rule breakers, the belligerent, vandals, family feuders, and deadbeats. Alternatively, Berry and Seiders (2008) categorize unfair customers into five groups: verbal abusers, blamers, rule breakers, opportunists, and returnaholics. They proposed a two-dimensional (severity of harm and frequency of behavior) model to illustrate the threshold of customer unfairness (Berry & Seiders, 2008). Customer unfairness may be represented by moderate customer behavior in terms of the severity of harm and frequency of behavior (Berry & Seiders, 2008). In the service encounter context, Yagil (2008) identified three types of customer misbehavior toward service providers: verbal aggression, physical aggression, and sexual harassment. Zemke and Anderson (1990) proposed a typology of five “customers from hell,” including abusive egocentrics, insulting whiners, hysterical shouters, dictators, and freeloaders.

By focusing on specific behaviors in service exchange, researchers have identified various forms of customer deviant behaviors, such as shoplifting (Babin & Babin, 1996; Piron & Young, 2000), vandalism (Fisher & Baron, 1982; Goldstein, 1996), customer resistance (Gabriel & Lang, 1997; Penaloza & Price, 1993), customer aggression and violence (Grove, Fisk & John,

2004; Rose & Neidermeyer, 1999), customer cheating (Wirtz & Kum, 2004) and illegitimate or opportunistic complaints (Kowalski, 1996; Reynolds & Harris, 2005; Ro & Wong, 2012; Wirtz & McColl-Kennedy, 2010). These different labels reflect diverse perspectives and positions on deviant customer behaviors.

### ***The Types of Jay-customer Behaviors: Customer Incivility vs. Customer Aggression***

The way jay-customers are described as a violation of socially-constructed standards (Fullerton & Punj, 1993) and harm-related behaviors (Lovelock, 1994; 2001) may suggest two types of jay-customer behaviors. Penaloza and Price (1993) suggest that customer misbehavior can take two forms: covert and overt. Covert misbehaviors disguise the identity of the perpetrator and their intentions to harm the target (Baron & Newman, 1996), whereas the intentions to harm are expressed openly in overt misbehavior (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994). In this study, jay-customer behaviors are categorized into two groups: (1) customer incivility described as subtle and covert misbehaviors and (2) customer aggression described as physical and active misbehaviors.

#### **Customer incivility**

Workplace incivility has gained attention due to its significantly harmful effects on both organizations and individuals (Cortina et al, 2001). In the organizational behavior research, workplace incivility refers to low-intensity mistreatment of employees by coworkers, such as making rude comments and speaking to a colleague in a condescending manner (e.g., Schat & Kelloway, 2005). Workplace incivility has been often investigated as interpersonal conflict with supervisors or other coworkers within an organization (e.g., Anderson & Pearson, 1999). However, it also can occur with the customer as the offender and the employee as the target (Sliter, Jex, Wolford & McInnerney, 2010). Customer incivility is described as behaviors that are

“executed by someone in a customer role with equivocal intent to harm an employee in violation of social norms of mutual respect and courtesy” (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010, p. 468). Similarly, this study defines customer incivility as rude or discourteous behaviors that violate the social norms of respect in service interactions (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010; Andersson & Pearson, 1999). It may include verbal or nonverbal aggression from customers in subtle or passive forms.

### Customer aggression

According to Boyd (2002), customer aggression toward service employees, such as kicking and slapping, which are mild forms of physical injuries, occurs commonly in the workplace. Sometimes, the personal property of employees (e.g., work station, computer, etc.) can be a target for customer aggression (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Customer aggression toward service providers differs in the level of extremity of injury; physical assaults, which are felonies, are the least common but the most harmful, and thus have profound effects on service employees (Yagil, 2008). Aggression in the workplace is well researched in an organizational behavior context, and it is generally described as a deviant behavior that is physical, active, and a direct form of aggression that is motivated by intent to harm (e.g., Folger, Robinson, Dietz, McLean Parks, & Baron, 1998; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1996). Therefore, this study defines customer aggression as customers' physical violence toward service employees with intent to harm.

### ***Employee Job Stress***

Since many adults spend almost half of their waking hours on work-related activities, it is likely that not only physical factors, but also social and psychological factors of a job affect their stress (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Job stress is generally described as an unpleasant



emotional experience associated with negative feelings such as fear, anxiety, irritation, annoyance, anger, sadness, and depression (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, and Pinneau (1975) define job stress as "any characteristics of the job environment which pose a threat to the individual." They describe demands that an employee may not be able to meet and insufficient supplies to meet an employee's needs as two sources of job stress that may threaten employees.

Service employees' job norms often require them to smile and greet customers in a friendly manner even when they are not feeling well, and to hide annoyance when a customer is being unreasonably demanding (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005). Thus, hospitality employees often suppress their negative emotions and display positive emotions they are not feeling when they are faced with rude or hostile customers (Glomb & Tews, 2004). In Harris and Reynolds's (2003) study, nearly 93% of customer-contact employee respondents indicated that dysfunctional customer behavior negatively affected their emotional state. Jay-customer behavior leads to feigned emotional display to pacify disruptive, aggressive, or intoxicated customers (Harris & Reynolds, 2003) and these feigned emotions have been described as emotional labor (Hochschild 1983; Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998). These studies indicate that jay-customer behaviors contribute to service employees' job stress.

### ***Jay-customer Behavior and Employee Job Stress***

Barling (1996) suggests that workplace incivility, including unjust, harassing, verbally abusive, or psychologically aggressive behaviors from others, can cause various adverse job-related consequences among targets. Customer verbal abuse was reported to be more frequent than supervisor or coworker verbal abuse (Grandey et al., 2004), and it was positively related to

emotional exhaustion among employees in different service occupations (Dormann & Zapf, 2004). Karatepe, Yorganci, and Haktanir (2008) stated that customers who display verbal aggression cause frontline employees to become dissatisfied with their jobs and consider leaving the organization. Despite customer incivility in service encounters, service organizations demand that guest-contact employees behave courteously and in a friendly manner towards customers (Boyd, 2002; Yagil, 2008). Rupp and Spencer (2006) found that unfair customer behaviors increased the degree of effort required for employees to control their emotions in interpersonal transactions. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that customer incivility significantly affects employees' perceptions of their job conditions, and in turn, their jobs themselves.

Researchers suggested customer violence has relatively mild effects, such as mood changes, in the short term, but if it occurs repeatedly in the long term, it may cause severe psychological and physical damage to service employees (Boyd, 2002; Yagil; 2008). For example, Driscoll et al. (1995) examined the psychological effects of the physical assault in the workplace, and the results revealed that workers who had been assaulted were more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and low job satisfaction than their coworkers who had not been assaulted. Also, employees who have experienced customer misbehavior consistently might suffer from memory flashbacks, anxiety and sleeplessness (Harris & Reynolds, 2003).

Guest-contact employees interact frequently with customers and are expected to deal with a number of customer requests (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008); hence, they are more likely to experience jay-customers behavior than any other types/positions of employees (e.g., back-office employees). Being frequently exposed to jay-customer behavior would negatively affect guest-contact employees (Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005). Therefore, this study posits that jay-customer behaviors are a source of job stress for service employees. Employees who often experience

customer incivility and aggression are more likely to experience job stress. Thus, the following hypotheses are stated:

**Hypothesis 1:** Customer incivility would increase the level of employee job stress.

**Hypothesis 2:** Customer aggression would increase the level of employee job stress.

### ***Employee Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is the employee's perception that one's job fulfills the important values that are congruent with one's needs (Locke, 1976). There are many factors that influence employees' job satisfaction, and a substantial amount of research has been devoted to theorizing job satisfaction (e.g., Ghiselli, La Lopa, & Bai, 2001; Judge, Hanish, & Drankoski, 1995; Tepesi & Barttlet, 2002). For example, Herzberg, Mausner, and Synderman (1959) discuss intrinsic and extrinsic factors that lead to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Intrinsic factors, also called "satisfiers," are related to the content of the job or the job itself, and they are considered to fulfill people's psychological needs, such as achievement, advancement, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself (Herzberg, 1987). Hygiene or extrinsic factors that are related to the job environment include compensation, supervision, working conditions, and company policy, and when those factors are lacking, job dissatisfaction could be generated (Herzberg, 1987).

There is substantial empirical evidence to support the relationship between job stress and employee job dissatisfaction (e.g., Denton et al., 2002). For instance, Lee and Ashforth (1996), in their meta-analytic study, reported that job stress had a positive correlation with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They also found that these role stressors were negatively correlated with personal accomplishment. Similarly, Hsieh and Hsieh (2003) found that the role stressors significantly and positively affected manufacturing and service employees' emotional

exhaustion and depersonalization. Apparently, job satisfaction has been widely researched as an outcome variable which is closely linked to job stress (Brief & Atieh, 1987; Decker & Borgen, 1993; Denton et al., 2002). It is proposed, therefore, that employee job stress has a mediating effect between jay-customer behaviors and employee job satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 3:** Employee job stress caused by jay-customers' behavior will lead to lower employee job satisfaction.

Past research has identified a variety of determinants of job satisfaction, including praise for accomplishments, support of supervisors and peers, intrinsically interesting work, and fair pay (e.g., Judge, Hanish, & Drankoski, 1995). Since this study focuses on employees' job stress and satisfaction induced in social interactions with jay-customers, interpersonal factors that reflect individual tendency and organizational members are considered most relevant. For example, Donovan, Brown, and Mowen (2004) suggest a positive relationship between employees' customer-orientation trait and job satisfaction. Other researchers suggest that supervisor support and coworker support are the most relevant social support for employees; they significantly affect employee's job stress level (e.g., Babin & Boles; 1996; Bradley & Cartwright, 2002; Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Poon, 2011). Based on the past research, customer orientation, supervisor support and coworker support are included as control variables, and they are discussed in the following sections.

### ***Customer Orientations***

Customer orientation has been considered as one of the factors that are positively related to employee job satisfaction (Donovan, Brown, & Mowen, 2004). It is generally defined as the

employee's tendency to enjoy his or her job (Dienhart et al., 1992). Prior research has suggested that customer orientation significantly affects employees' overall service performance (Kim et al., 2005) and job satisfaction (Lee et al., 1999; Yoo et al., 2000). Donovan et al. (2004) suggest that since customer-oriented employees enjoy the work of serving customers, they fit the service setting better than those who do not. They further suggest that service employees who have higher degrees of customer orientation would be more satisfied with their jobs than employees who have less customer orientation (Donovan et al., 2004).

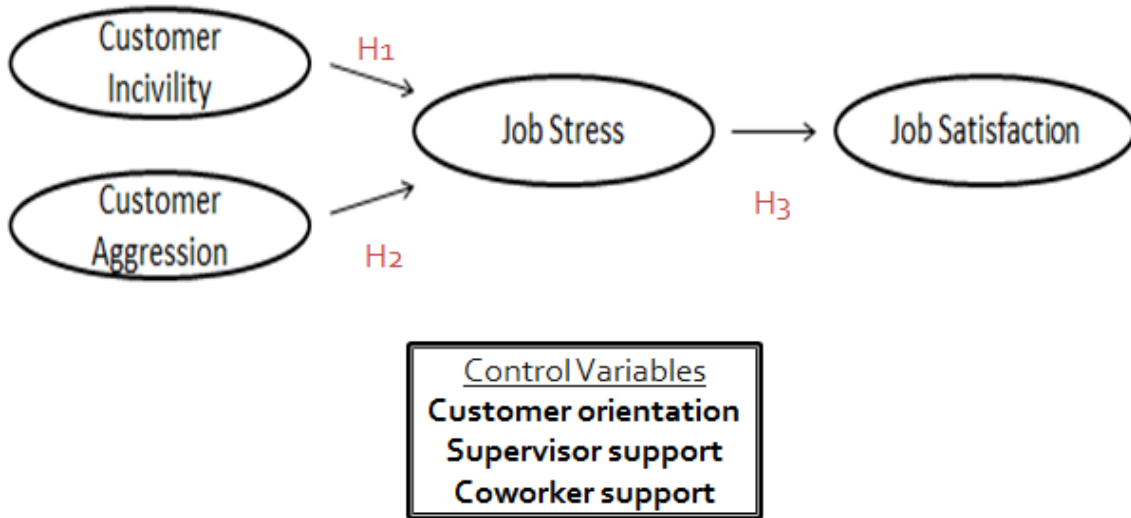
### ***Supervisor and Coworker Support***

In the service exchange, not only the interactions with customers, but also the relationship with other people in the workplace, such as supervisor and coworkers, can significantly affect employees' job stress and job satisfaction. Bradley and Cartwright (2002) also argued that social support in the workplace is recognized as a factor in job stress. Hodson (1997) argued that the social relations in the workplace may make a considerable contribution to employees' job satisfaction, productivity, and well-being. Previous studies have reported a positive relationship between supervisor or coworker support and job satisfaction at work (Cummins, 1989; Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Ganster, Fusilier, & Mayes, 1986; LaRocco & Jones, 1978; Schneider & Smith, 1996).

Babin and Boles (1996) found a relationship between strong and positive supervisory support and job satisfaction, and asserted the importance of developing and rewarding supportive and supervisory practices for higher employee job satisfaction. Researchers suggest that the relationship with coworkers mitigates job dissatisfaction and other undesirable outcomes (Ducharme & Martin, 2000). Also, Schneider and Smith (1996) report the buffering effects of

social support from coworkers on job stress. Since coworkers may help employees by sympathizing, understanding, and listening to a fellow employee's problems, this emotional support could decrease physiological strain and job stress, as well as increase job performance and job satisfaction (Beehr et al., 2000; Ladd and Henry, 2000; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2009).

In summary, the previous literature highlights the prevalence of jay-customer behavior and discusses the types and motivations of such behaviors. However, there is a lack of research in regard to how jay-customers' deviant behavior affects frontline employees' satisfaction. This study focuses on two types of jay-customer behaviors, customer incivility and customer aggression, and examines their impact on employees' job stress and job dissatisfaction. Customer incivility refers to jay-customer behaviors that violate the social norms of respect in service interactions. It includes rude or discourteous customer behaviors toward service employees, such as verbal mistreatment and physiological hostility. Customer aggression refers to customers' physical violence toward service employees. This study proposes that customer incivility and customer aggression negatively affect employees' job satisfaction, and employees' job stress mediates the relationship between jay-customer behavior and job satisfaction. Additionally, employees' customer orientation and support from supervisors and coworkers are included as control variables. The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. A conceptual model of the effect of jay-customer behavior on employees**

## CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods employed to accomplish the research process. First, the survey instrument is described. Next, the data collection procedures are described. Finally, the measurement items of the constructs are presented.

### *Survey Instrument*

This study used a self-administered survey consisting of the measures of four main constructs (customer incivility, customer aggression, employee job stress, and employee job satisfaction), three control variables (customer orientation, supervisor support, and coworker support), and demographics. First, participants were asked to indicate how often they encounter customer incivility and customer aggression. Next, they were asked to respond to questions regarding their job stress and job satisfaction. In addition, past research suggests that customer orientation (Donavan, Brown & Mowen, 2004) and workplace support (Babin & Boles, 1996; Spector, Dwyer, & Jex, 1988) may affect employee job stress and job satisfaction levels. Therefore, scales of customer orientation, supervisor support and coworker support were included as control variables in the survey. Finally, demographics and work experience information were gathered. Two forms of the survey were created by rotating the order of the items and were randomly distributed to the participants to avoid the order-effect bias of the survey items.

### *Data Collection*

The target population of this study was guest-contact employees in the hospitality



industry. Two Regional Operation Directors (ROD) of one national chain economy hotel were contacted and agreed to participate in the study. The RODs were in charge of the hotel chains in the southeastern part of the United States. An online survey was created and distributed to guest-contact employees (e.g., front desk agents, concierges, servers) via email by upper-level managers of this chain hotel. Two more reminders were sent to managers to resend the survey to employees. These efforts resulted in 60 completed surveys. Out of 60, eight declined to participate in the study; as a result, a total of 52 useable surveys were collected. Due to the small sample size, an additional alternative procedure was utilized. Since hospitality students often work as guest-contact employees, they were targeted as alternate samples for this study. A total of 158 students currently working as guest-contact employees (e.g., food servers, front desk agents and concierges) in the hospitality industry were recruited, with their instructors' permission, from four classes at a large university in the southeastern part of the United States. This data collection effort resulted in 175 additional student samples. Seventeen student samples were excluded due to excessive missing information and/or an inadequate response pattern. Therefore, a total of 210 respondents were analyzed for this study.

### ***Measures***

The survey items used in this study were adapted from the past research. Since the scales to measure jay-customer behaviors were not available in previous research, workplace incivility (10 items) and aggression (5 items) scales from organization behavior studies (Cortina et al., 2001; Neuman & Baron, 1998) were adapted and modified to assess customer incivility and aggression. The modified scales of customer incivility and customer aggression were assessed by a panel of 16 experts in the hospitality field. Fourteen of them were currently working in the

hospitality industry, and the other two were faculty members who had past work experience in hotels and were teaching hospitality management. They were asked to indicate the belongingness of the items to two deviant customer behavior constructs. Based on the ratings and comments, minor wording changes were made and two items were eliminated from the customer incivility scales. Detailed measurement descriptions of all constructs are as follows.

Customer incivility was measured by 10 items. Four items from the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) (Cortina et al., 2001) and six items from Neuman and Baron's (1998) study were adapted and modified for this study as described previously. Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they experienced each item (e.g., Customer put me down or was condescending to me, Customer made demeaning or derogatory remarks about me) on a 7-point scale (1 =never, 7 =always).

Customer aggression was measured by five items adapted and modified from Neuman and Baron's (1998) study. Participants were asked how often they encountered customer aggression behaviors (e.g., Customer tried to attack me with an object or weapon, Customer made threats of physical violence). Since these types of customer behavior rarely occur, respondents were asked to indicate how many times they had experienced the behaviors within the last six months.

Employee job stress was measured by nine items (e.g., I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job, Too many people at my level in the company get burned out by job demands). Five items were adapted from Parker and DeCotiis's (1983) study, and four items were from Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning's (1986) study.

Finally, employee job satisfaction was measured by 13 items adapted from Brayfield and Rothe's (1951) study (e.g., I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job, I feel that my job is no

more interesting than others I could get). The items of employee job stress and satisfaction were measured by a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).

In terms of control variables, customer orientation was measured by 12 items (e.g., I really enjoy serving my customers, I keep the best interests of the customer in mind) adapted from Brown et al. (2002). Supervisor support was measured by five items (e.g., Supervisors expect far too much from employees) adapted from Babin and Boles (1996). Coworker support was measured by 4 items (e.g., How often could you rely on your coworkers to assist you with practical matters/minor emergencies off-duty?) adapted from Bacharach and Bamberger (2007). Customer orientation and supervisor support were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree), and coworker support was measured on a different 7-point scale (1=never, 7=always). Appendix A shows the items used for the study.

## CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

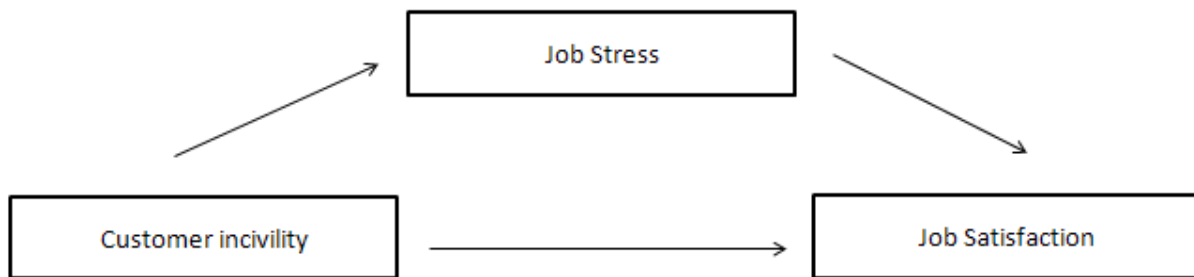
This study aimed to examine how jay-customer behavior affects guest-contact employees. Specifically, this study hypothesized that customer incivility and customer aggression increase the level of employee job stress (Hypothesis 1 and 2). Also, employee job stress caused by jay-customer behavior, in turn, leads to lower employee job satisfaction (Hypothesis 3). A pretest was conducted and the proposed model was revised based on the results. The main study was conducted to test three hypotheses based on the revised model. This chapter presents the results of the data analyses, and a discussion follows.

### *Pretest*

The sample for the pretest consisted of undergraduate students who had work experience as guest-contact employees in the hospitality industry. A total of 98 participants were collected from five classes in a university in the southeast part of United States. The majority were female (82%) and the average age was 21 years old. In terms of work experience, 79% of the respondents reported that they were currently working in the hospitality industry, and 65% of the respondents had less than three years of working experience. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were part-time employees, and the rest of them were full-time employees. For the industry, 50%, 27.5%, 17.5%, and 5% of the respondents were currently working or had worked in restaurants, hotels, the theme park industry, and other service industries (e.g., golf club, convention centers), respectively.

The pretest results showed a positive relationship between customer incivility and employee job stress, yet no direct relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction was found. In addition, the results showed a full mediation effect of job stress on the

relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction. Unexpectedly, customer aggression could not be analyzed due to the low number of responses. Only six respondents indicated that they had experienced customer aggression in last six months. Overall, the pretest results supported the predicted relationship among customer incivility, job stress, and job satisfaction. However, customer aggression was rarely experienced by guest contact employees; in fact, instances were too few to analyze. Based on the results, customer aggression was excluded from further examination and the conceptual model was revised accordingly. The revised model describes how customer incivility increases employees' job stress level, and how it would negatively affect employees' job satisfaction as a result (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Revised conceptual model of the effect of jay-customer behavior on employees**

### ***Main Study***

#### Demographic characteristics of the respondents

A total of 210 employees who were currently working in guest-contact positions participated in the study and were analyzed for the main study. Overall, the majority of participants were female (65.6%) and the average age was 29.7 years old (ranged from 19 to 52). In terms of sample groups, females (67.7%) were dominant in sample 2, composed of

undergraduate students; the employees in sample 1 were relatively evenly divided (male 41.2%, female 58.8%). The age of the two groups was significantly different ( $t=-19.70$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The respondents in sample 1 were relatively older (mean 37.4) than the ones in sample 2 (mean 22.0), who were undergraduate students with guest-contact experience in the hospitality industry.

In terms of job status, 41.6% of the respondents were full-time employees and the rest of them (58.4%) were part-time employees. Not surprisingly, the majority of the respondents in sample 2 were part-time employees, and 96.1% of the respondents in sample 1 were full-time employees. Approximately 70% of the respondents reported that they were frontline employees, and the rest of them were in managerial positions. Furthermore, in terms of work experience, the hotel employees who composed sample 1 had significantly more work experience in the hospitality industry, with a mean of 14.1 years, compared to the sample 2 respondents (mean 4.0 years). The majority of respondents (71%) had college credits but no earned degree, and the rest of them had a college degree (28%). For the industry, 51.4%, 27.9%, and 15.4% of the respondents were currently working in the hotel, restaurant and theme park industries, respectively. Table 1 shows the detailed profile of the respondents.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile**

	Sample 1 <i>n</i> =52		Sample 2 <i>n</i> =158		Sample combined <i>n</i> =210	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<b>Age</b>						
Average years (range)	37.4 (23-52)		22.0 (19-43)		29.7 (19-52)	
<b>Work experience</b>						
Average years (range)	14.1 (1-36)		4.0 (1-13)		6.5 (1-36)	
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	21	41.2%	51	32.3%	72	34.4%
Female	30	58.8%	107	67.7%	137	65.6%
<b>Job status</b>						
Full-time employee	49	96.1%	38	24%	87	41.6%

	Sample 1 <i>n</i> =52		Sample 2 <i>n</i> =158		Sample combined <i>n</i> =210	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Part-time employee	2	3.9%	120	75.9%	122	58.4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
White/Caucasian	25	49.0%	108	70.1%	133	64.9%
Hispanic/Latin	13	25.5%	25	16.2%	38	18.5%
Black/African	6	11.8%	8	5.2%	14	6.8%
Asian	6	11.8%	5	3.2%	11	5.4%
Other	1	3.0%	8	5.2%		4.4%
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Single	21	40.4%	146	92.4%	167	79.5%
Married	30	57.7%	7	4.4%	37	17.6%
Other	1	1.9%	5	3.2%	6	2.9%
<b>Education Level</b>						
Some high school	1	1.9%	0	.0%	1	.5%
High school degree	5	9.6%	1	.6%	6	2.9%
College but no degree	11	21.1%	81	51.3%	92	43.8%
College degree	29	55.8%	74	46.8%	103	49.0%
Graduate degree	6	11.5%	2	1.3%	8	3.8%

Although customer aggression was excluded in the revised model, the survey explored its frequency. Consistent with the pretest results, customer aggression showed a very low frequency. Among 210 respondents, only 45 respondents reported that they had experienced customer aggression within the last year. Similarly, frequency analysis was conducted to see the pattern of customer aggression. Out of 45 respondents, 37 people indicated that they had experienced customer aggression less than 5 times. 3 respondents fell into the “5 to 10 times” category, and 5 respondents had experienced customer aggression more than 10 times. Surprisingly, 1 respondent reported that he/she had experienced customer aggression more than 100 times within 10 years of work experience as a hotel manager in the hotel industry. However, since the majority of the respondents did not report customer aggression, it was excluded from the further analysis of hypothesis testing.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the mean scores, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and correlations of all constructs. The Cronbach's alpha of constructs ranged from 0.78 to 0.90, and all the measures exceeded the minimum suggestion of 0.70 by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). This indicates that the measurement items were internally consistent for the constructs.

In order to compare the sample 1 and sample 2, a series of independent t-tests was performed. The test was conducted in terms of all six constructs (customer incivility, job stress, job satisfaction, customer orientation, supervisor support, and coworker support). The results show that customer incivility, customer orientation, supervisor support, and coworker support of the two groups were not significantly different, and two variables (job stress and job satisfaction) were statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$  level. Job stress level was higher for sample 1 (Mean=3.83) than for sample 2 (Mean=3.38). Also, job satisfaction level was lower for sample 1 (M= 5.18) than sample 2 (M=5.49). These results indicate that employees who were currently working at hotels had perceived more jobs stress and less job satisfaction at their workplaces compared to the student sample. Since two sample groups showed no difference in four out of six constructs, this study combined the two samples for the further analysis.

**Table 2. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations of the constructs**

<b>Variables (number of items)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.Customer incivility (10)	2.56	.93	0.87					
2.Job stress (9)	3.50	1.31	0.89	.55**				
3.Job satisfaction (13)	5.26	1.01	0.90	-.35**	-.52**			
4.Customer orientations (12)	6.16	.68	0.89	-.24**	-.27**	.46**		



<b>Variables</b> (number of items)	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
5. Supervisor support (5)	4.63	1.25	0.78	-.28**	-.40**	.49**	.20**	
6. Coworker support (4)	4.75	1.34	0.88	-.02	-.17*	.35**	.14	.36**

Note: \*\*Correlation is significant at the  $\alpha = 0.01$  level (2-tailed).

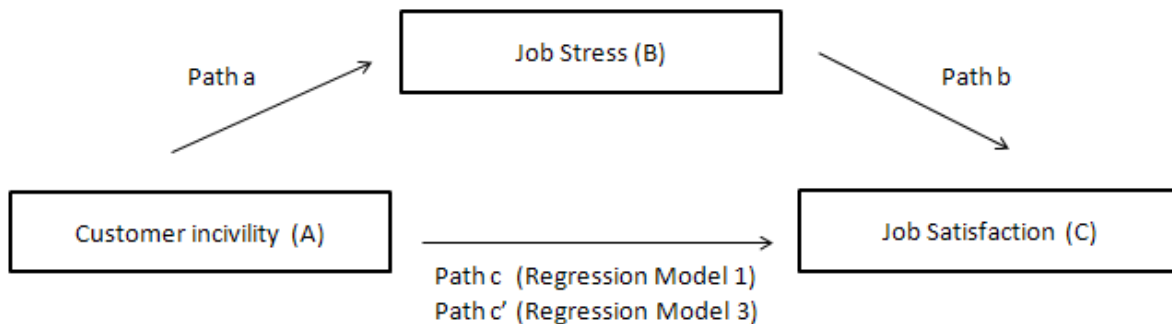
\*Correlation is significant at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level (2-tailed).

The relationships between customer incivility, employee job stress, and employee job satisfaction were examined by Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (see Table 2). The results show that there was a positive correlation (.55) between customer incivility and employee job stress. In terms of the relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction, the results revealed that there was a medium, negative correlation (-.35) of high levels of customer incivility with lower job satisfaction of employees. In addition, the relationship between employee job stress and job satisfaction was also revealed as a negative correlation (-.52). These results indicate that the more job stress an employee perceives, the less job satisfaction he or she will have, and the strength of this relationship is medium according to the guidelines of Cohen (1988).

### ***Regressions***

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of an independent variable (customer incivility) through a mediator (employee job stress) to predict an outcome (employee job satisfaction), after controlling for the influence of customer orientation, supervisor and coworkers. The series of regression analyses to test a mediation model was performed based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines and followed closely the recent demonstration provided by Kwun and Oh (2006).

Baron and Kenny (1986) suggested that a variable acts as a mediator when it meets four conditions. The first regression model should show that the independent variable is a significant predictor of the dependent variable ( $A \rightarrow C$ ) to establish that there is an effect to mediate (Path  $c$  in Figure 3). In the second regression model, the independent variable should be a significant predictor of the mediator ( $A \rightarrow B$ ) to establish Path  $a$  (Figure 3). The third regression model should include both the independent and mediator variables to predict the dependent variable ( $A, B \rightarrow C$ ). In the third regression analysis, two conditions must be met: (i) the mediator is a significant predictor of the dependent variable ( $B \rightarrow C$ ; Path  $b$  in Figure 3) after controlling for the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable, and (ii) the direct relationship of the independent variable to the dependent variable should be significantly reduced compared to the first regression model (Path  $c' < \text{Path } c$ ) (Baron & Kenny, 1986).



**Figure 3. Statistical model of customer incivility, job stress and job satisfaction**

Taken together, four conditions were tested with three multiple regression analyses. Table 3 shows the results of regression analysis. The variance inflation factors (VIF) for each

independent variable and covariate in all regression models show that multicollinearity does not appear to be a problem.

The first regression model revealed that customer incivility was significantly related to employee job satisfaction ( $A \rightarrow C$ ,  $\beta = -.186$ ,  $p = .001$ ) after controlling for customer orientation, supervisor support and coworker support (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.418$ ). Next, the significance of the customer incivility  $\rightarrow$  job stress ( $A \rightarrow B$ ,  $\beta = .465$ ,  $p = .000$ ) was examined in the second regression model (Adj.  $R^2 = 0.376$ ). Then, customer incivility and job stress were used as predictors for job satisfaction in the third regression model. Employee job stress was significantly related to employee job satisfaction ( $B \rightarrow C$ ,  $\beta = -.278$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The relative effect of customer incivility on job satisfaction ( $A \rightarrow C$ ) in the third regression model was not significant ( $\beta = -.057$ ,  $p = .360$ ). The final model (Model 3) explained 46.3% of job satisfaction. Finally, the Sobel test was used to confirm whether the coefficient of customer incivility in Model 3 ( $\beta = -.057$ ) is reduced significantly compared to the coefficient of customer incivility in Model 1 ( $\beta = -.186$ ). The Sobel's Z was 3.75 and the observed p-value was .000, which is less than .05. The results of regression analyses and the Sobel test suggest that employee job stress fully mediated the relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction.

**Table 3. Regression Analysis Results**

Independent Variable	Std. Coefficient	t-Value	Sig.	VIF
<b>Job Satisfaction (Model 1): <math>A \rightarrow C</math></b>				
<b>Step 1</b>				
Customer orientation	.319	5.749	.000	1.097
Supervisor support	.305	5.111	.000	1.270
Coworker support	.195	3.417	.001	1.165

Independent Variable	Std. Coefficient	t-Value	Sig.	VIF
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.390				
<b>Step 2</b>				
Customer incivility	-.186	-3.284	.001	1.147
Δ R <sup>2</sup> = 0.028, p = .001, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.418				
<b>Job Stress (Model 2): A → B</b>				
<b>Step 1</b>				
Customer orientation	-.098	-1.716	.008	1.097
Supervisor support	-.226	-3.663	.000	1.270
Coworker support	-.073	-1.228	.221	1.165
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.188				
<b>Step 2</b>				
Customer incivility	.465	7.922	.000	1.147
Δ R <sup>2</sup> = 0.188, p = .000, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.376				
<b>Job Satisfaction (Model 3): A, B → C</b>				
<b>Step 1</b>				
Customer orientation	.291	5.435	.000	1.113
Supervisor support	.242	4.094	.000	1.354
Coworker support	.175	3.180	.002	1.174
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.390				
<b>Step 2</b>				
Customer incivility	-.057	-.918	.360	1.500
Job stress	-.278	-4.274	.000	1.634
Δ R <sup>2</sup> = 0.073, p = .000, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.463				

## *Discussion*

The objective of this study was to examine hospitality guest-contact employees' experience of jay-customer behaviors and how they perceive the impacts of those behaviors on their job stress and job satisfaction levels. In summary, the findings of this study reveal that: (1) customer incivility positively affect employees' job stress; (2) customer incivility also affects employees' job satisfaction but in a negative way; (3) employees' job stress, caused by customer incivility, acts as a mediator in the relationship between customer incivility and employees' job satisfaction.

First, the results confirmed the positive relationship between customer incivility and employee job stress, which means that when employees experience more jay-customer behaviors, their job stress increases. Hypothesis 1, therefore, was supported. Additionally, the results showed the negative relationship between customer incivility and employees' job satisfaction. This indicates that the more customer misbehavior an employee experiences, the less satisfied that employee will be with his or her job. These findings suggest that jay-customer behaviors significantly affect employees' job stress and job satisfaction. Although previous research has documented service employees' role stress and emotional labor triggered by customer violence and aggression (e.g., Barling, 1996; Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005; Rupp & Spencer, 2006), there is a lack of research examining customer incivility toward service employees job in particular. Although customer incivility reflects subtle and mild customer misbehavior, the finding demonstrates its damaging effect on employees' job stress.

Second, most participants in this study reported that they had not experienced customer aggression. Therefore, this study was not able to examine its impact on service employees' job stress and satisfaction. Even though some past research noted that an overt form of dysfunctional

customer behavior, such as aggression and violence, is an increasingly common phenomenon in the service setting (McGrath & Golding, 1996; Rose & Neidermeyer, 1999), this study failed to uncover customer aggression. Consequently, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Third, the results showed that employee job stress mediated the relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction. In other words, customer incivility leads to increased employee job stress, which, in turn, results in lower employee job satisfaction. Thus, the results provide support for hypothesis 3. These findings provide further evidence that customer misbehavior is a source of guest-contact employees' job stress, which (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Grandey et al., 2004), in turn, decreases customer satisfaction (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

One discrepancy in the results from the pretest and the main study existed. There was no direct relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction in the pretest results, whereas the main study showed a significant negative relationship between those two variables. This different result might be due to the sample size and sample demographics. First of all, the sample size of the main study was more than twice the pretest sample size. Norusis (2010) stated that the statistical power to discover statistical significance is increased by a larger sample size. In addition to that, the main test respondents were, on average, 8.9 years older than the respondents of the pretest and had more work experience. An employee who has worked many years at a guest-contact position in the hospitality industry may have been exposed to more customer misbehavior, and it might decrease job satisfaction. In this regard, the results of the main study show a negative relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER V. IMPLICATION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This chapter is designed to provide theoretical and managerial implications based on the findings from this study. Furthermore, this chapter presents the limitations of this study and provides recommendations for future research regarding jay-customers' impact on guest-contact employees.

### ***Implications***

A theoretical contribution of this study would be to offer insights into the relationship among jay-customers' behavior and employees' job stress and job satisfaction. According to the author's best knowledge, this study is the first attempt to examine the impact of jay-customer behavior and how it affects guest-contact employees' perceptions toward job stress and job satisfaction in the hospitality setting. The mediation analyses results show that customer incivility affects employee job satisfaction via employee job stress. The findings of this study can make a contribution to the hospitality service management literature by providing empirical evidence of customer incivility and its impact on guest-contact employees.

This study also provides meaningful managerial implications. First, hospitality managers should acknowledge the existence of jay-customer behaviors and recognize their significant impact on employees' job stress and job satisfaction, which eventually would affect customer satisfaction in the long term. Therefore, managers should take steps to protect their employees from jay-customer misbehaviors. For example, compiling a list of frequent jay-customers would be helpful to identify undesirable customers. By establishing internal policy regarding frequent jay-customers, guest-contact employees can take appropriate steps to deal with this type of customer. Employees should know the cut-off points, minimums and maximums which are

allowed when they deal with customers' misbehaviors (Bailey, 1994), and these policies should go with written procedures (Karatepe, Yorganci, & Haktanir, 2008). In that way, managers can manage guest-contact employees' job stress and job satisfaction better by reducing employee experience of customer incivility.

Second, the findings of this study suggest that creating a support system with management and coworkers is important for alleviating job stress. Providing stress-management programs for employees is suggested to quell and manage their anger and frustration from the jay-customer behaviors. Short breaks would also be effective for employees, especially after dealing with jay-customers.

Third, appropriate training programs should be developed to minimize the negative impact of jay-customer behavior on employees. Hospitality companies should implement training programs and educate employees not to perceive customer misbehavior personally. In addition, employees often have to feign their emotions to deal with customers' deviant behaviors; providing mentoring support or developing training programs can help employees to decrease emotional dissonance and to control emotional exhaustion.

Last, a previous study reveals that employee empowerment leads to less customer misbehavior (Ben-zur & Yagil, 2005). Since generating customer satisfaction is a prime goal of service providers, employees mostly try to endure jay-customers even if they are problematic or aggressive; however, it is managers' role to protect their employees from those misbehaviors. Therefore, even though managers cannot control or decrease customers' misbehavior, they should empower their employees to have an equal power balance between customer and employee (Kern & Grandey, 2009).



### ***Limitations and Future Research***

This study has some limitations. First, this study used a convenience sample, and about 70% of the respondents in the main study were a student sample. Although they were currently working as guest-contact employees, this student sample group (sample 2) tended to be younger and less experienced than the guest-contact employee sample collected from the hotel (sample 1). Thus, the generalizability of the findings to the whole hospitality employee population is limited. Future research should expand on this study by using non-student samples and probability sampling.

Second, this study was not able to assess the impact of customer aggression due to its low frequency. Researchers note that severe forms of customer aggression, such as violence and attack, may not occur very commonly in everyday work settings (Kaukiainen et al., 2001). Although their occurrence may be infrequent, intense events like physical violence are certainly highly stressful (Grandy et al., 2004), and they could have a serious negative impact on employees. Therefore, future studies should try to incorporate customer aggression more effectively. Since it does not occur as often as customer incivility, an alternative approach, such as Critical Incident Technique (Bitner, Booms, & Teatrault, 1990), would be useful to examine such behavior.

Third, this study was conducted in a family-oriented destination. Future studies need to consider the characteristics of the destination. Employees working in the cities such as Las Vegas, where the crime rate is high due to gambling (Grinols & Mustar, 2006); or New Orleans, which is one of the cities with the nation's highest murder rate (Gotham, 2002), may have experienced more customer aggression. Future research is suggested to examine jay-customer behaviors in various tourist destinations.

Fourth, this study included three control variables (customer orientation, supervisor support, and coworker support). Since this study focuses on the mediation chain of customer incivility, job stress, and job satisfaction, those individual tendencies and support within the organization are controlled in the analyses. The interaction relationship between them might affect the results; however, it was not examined in this study. Future studies should look into the interaction effects of control variables on the dependent variable.

Fifth, this study only includes customer orientation, supervisor support, and coworker support as covariates, yet there are many other factors which can affect the levels of employees' job stress and job satisfaction. Future studies should consider other factors, such as pay/benefits satisfaction, promotional satisfaction, or career salience.

Sixth, this study did not examine the detailed characteristic of the respondents, which could significantly influence the results of study. Depending on their positions (e.g., bartenders, bellhops), or the types of service organization in which they work (e.g., 24-hour restaurants versus upscale fine dining restaurants), employees' perception toward jay-customers may vary. Future studies need to consider additional factors to see how these characteristics affect jay-customers' impact on employee job stress and job satisfaction.

Finally, this study combined the samples gathered from various hospitality industries, including hotels, restaurants, and theme parks. One would expect variations of jay-customer behavior and its impact on employees depending on their job characteristics (full-time or part-time, etc.). For example, the hotel industry tends to have more full-time employees than the restaurant industry, and full-time employees are usually have more trained and empowered than part-time employees. Future research is encouraged to examine variations of jay-customers' impact on employees by hospitality industry segment.

## **APPENDIX A: MEASUREMENT ITEMS**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Source</b>
Customer Incivility (10 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer put me down or was condescending to me.</li> <li>• Customer made demeaning or derogatory remarks about me.</li> <li>• Customer addressed me in unprofessional terms.</li> <li>• Customer was taking out his/her own frustrations on me.</li> <li>• Customer made rude comments about my physical appearance.</li> <li>• Customer made offensive sexual comments to me.</li> <li>• Customer did staring, dirty look, or negative eye-contact.</li> <li>• Customer made negative or obscene gestures toward me.</li> <li>• Customer ridiculed me.</li> <li>• Customer sent unfairly negative information to a higher level manager in the company.</li> </ul>	Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) Cortina et al., 2001), Neuman & Baron (1998)
Customer Aggression (5 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer tried to attack me with an object or weapon.</li> <li>• Customer did physical attack/assault (e.g., pushing, shoving, hitting).</li> <li>• Customer made threats of physical violence.</li> <li>• Customer endangered my safety.</li> <li>• Customer intentionally damaged personal property of employee.</li> </ul>	Neuman & Baron (1998)
Job Stress (9 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job.</li> <li>• My job gets to me more than it should.</li> <li>• There are lots of times when my job drives me right up the wall.</li> <li>• Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest.</li> <li>• Too many people at my level in the company get burned out by job demands.</li> <li>• I feel a great deal of stress because of my job.</li> <li>• Very few stressful things happen to me at work.</li> <li>• My job is extremely stressful.</li> <li>• I almost never feel stressed at work.</li> </ul>	Parker & DeCotiis (1983), Motowidlo, Packard, & Mannin (1986)
Job Satisfaction (13 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I consider my job rather unpleasant.</li> <li>• I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.</li> <li>• Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work.</li> <li>• I am satisfied with my job for the time being.</li> <li>• I feel that my job is no more interesting than others I could get.</li> </ul>	Brayfield & Rothe (1951)

Variable	Items	Source
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I definitely dislike my work.</li> <li>• I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.</li> <li>• Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.</li> <li>• Each day of work seems like it will never end.</li> <li>• I like my job better than the average worker does.</li> <li>• My job is pretty uninteresting.</li> <li>• I find real enjoyment in my work.</li> <li>• I am disappointed that I ever took this job.</li> </ul>	
Customer-oriented Personality (12 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I find it easy to smile at each of my customers.</li> <li>• I enjoy remembering my customers' names.</li> <li>• It comes naturally to have empathy for my customers.</li> <li>• I enjoy responding quickly to my customers' requests.</li> <li>• I get satisfaction from making my customers happy.</li> <li>• I really enjoy serving my customers.</li> <li>• I try to help customers achieve their goals.</li> <li>• I achieve my own goals by satisfying customers.</li> <li>• I get customers to talk about their service needs with me.</li> <li>• I take a problem-solving approach with my customers.</li> <li>• I keep the best interests of the customer in mind.</li> <li>• I am able to answer a customer's questions correctly.</li> </ul>	Brown et al. (2002)
Supervisor Support (5 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors tend to talk down to employees.</li> <li>• Supervisors usually give full credit to ideas contributed by employees.</li> <li>• Supervisors often criticize employees over minor things.</li> <li>• Supervisors expect far too much from employees.</li> <li>• Supervisors really stand up for people.</li> </ul>	Babin & Boles (1996)
Coworker Support (4 items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often can your coworkers be counted on to listen, show understanding or show they care when things get tough at work?</li> <li>• How often can you rely on your coworkers for advice or information when things get tough at work?</li> <li>• How often do your coworkers go out of their way to do things to make your work-life easier?</li> <li>• How often could you rely on your coworkers to assist you with practical matters/minor emergencies off-duty?</li> </ul>	Bacharach & Bamberger (2007)

**APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL LETTER STUDENT SAMPLE**



## EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

**Title of Project:** Employee perceptions of customer misbehavior

**Principal Investigator:** Gawon Kim

**Co-Investigator:** Heejung Ro, Ph.D. (Faculty supervisor for the project)

Dear participants,

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purpose of this study is examining how jay-customer behavior affects guest-contact employees' job stress and their job dissatisfaction.
- The participant will be asked to participate in answering survey questions of 58 items regarding employees' perception of customer behaviors and their job. Any student who has guest contact work experience in the hospitality industry and over 18 years of age or older, can participate this study. This is voluntary participation and anonymous. There is no penalty for not taking part.
- The researcher will deliver survey to the individuals who want to participate in this survey. The survey will be collected in the class at the UCF Main campus and Rosen campus. The permission will be obtained from instructors before conducting survey. This survey is expected to 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
- The survey is anonymous. No personally identifiable information will be collected in the survey.
- Participants can learn about customer misbehaviors and its impact in the hospitality industry

**Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem:** If you have questions, concerns, or complaints: Dr. Heejung Ro, Assistant Professor, Hospitality Service Department, Rosen College of Hospitality Management, (407)903-8075 or by email at HeeJung.Ro@ucf.edu

**IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint:** Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

## **APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL LETTER EMPLOYEE SAMPLE**





## EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

**Title of Project:** Employee perceptions of customer misbehaviors

**Principal Investigator:** Gawon Kim

**Co-Investigator:** Heejung Ro, Ph.D. (Faculty supervisor for the project)

Dear participants,

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purpose of this study is to examine how customer misbehavior affects guest-contact employees' job stress and their job dissatisfaction.
- The participants will be asked to participate in answering 58 survey questions regarding employees' perceptions of customer behaviors and their job. Any employee who has guest contact work experience in the lodging industry and is 18 years of age or older, can participate in this study. The participation is voluntary and anonymous. There is no penalty for not taking part.
- Online survey will be used for this study. Survey will be distributed to employees' email by upper level managers of the hotel that agreed to participate in this study. This survey is expected to take 7 to 10 minutes to complete.
- The survey is anonymous. No personally identifiable information will be collected in the survey.
- Participants can learn about customer misbehaviors and their impact in the hospitality industry

**Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem:** If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact: Dr. Heejung Ro, Assistant Professor, Hospitality Service Department, Rosen College of Hospitality Management, (407)903-8075 or by email at [Heejung.Ro@ucf.edu](mailto:Heejung.Ro@ucf.edu)

**IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint:** Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who participate in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.



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