

Customer Mistreatment and its Effect on Service Employees' Well-being

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Publication Date:

2023

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/24715>

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Customer Mistreatment and its Effect on Service Employees' Well-being

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A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Management and Governance

UNSW Business School

November 2022

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to review and statistically synthesize the state of research on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes and to examine the spillover and spiraling mechanisms of resource losses. In study 1, I included 93 effect sizes of 80 independent samples from 70 primary studies ($N = 24,708$). I used a meta-analytic approach to conduct a quantitative review of the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Meta-regression was applied to explore the impact of contextual-level moderators (i.e., service provider type, mean sample age, percentage of female employees) on these relationships. Furthermore, I compared the effects of customer mistreatment with the effects of other work-related stressors (i.e., challenge-related stressors and hindrance-related stressors). The results show that customer mistreatment has a significant negative impact on service employees' affective outcomes (i.e., reduced job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased stress) and behavioral outcomes (i.e., increased emotional labor, increased surface acting, increased turnover intention, and increased work withdrawal). Additionally, the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' organizational commitment is influenced by a contextual-level moderator (i.e., service provider type). Furthermore, the meta-analysis results show that the effect sizes between customer mistreatment and employee outcomes ranged from moderately small to moderately large. In study 2, adopting a dynamic perspective of resource loss, I examined the spillover mechanism between employees' emotional exhaustion in the evening and their negative emotions the next morning. Moreover, I tested the spiraling mechanism from service employees' emotional exhaustion the previous evening to their emotional exhaustion the next evening. The results show that the impact of customer mistreatment on employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to the next day, which leads them to feel

negative emotions in the morning. Furthermore, the impact of customer mistreatment on employees' evening emotional exhaustion triggers their emotional exhaustion spirals, and their evening emotional exhaustion leads to more emotional exhaustion the next evening. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Professor Markus Groth for the continuous support of my PhD study and related research, for his patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my PhD study. Second, I would like to express my gratitude to Associate professor Lu (Nick) Wang and Professor Amirali Minbashian. You have always been patient with all my trifling questions, and have been supportive in providing me all the help you can. Last, I would like to thank my family for supporting me spiritually throughout writing this thesis and my life in general.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of Dissertation

1.1 Research Background

Given popular mantras such as “the customer is always right” and “the customer is king,” frontline service employees often encounter mistreatment from customers due to increased customer expectations and a perceived power imbalance in favor of customers (Groth et al., 2019). Customer mistreatment is especially prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industry due to the high level of customer interactions (Jung & Yoon, 2018; Wang et al., 2020). Research in the hospitality industry has shown that 66% of female and more than 50% of male service employees reported experiencing mistreatment from customers in their daily work (Sherwyn & Wagner, 2018). Customer mistreatment is defined as “low quality interpersonal treatment employees receive from their customers” (Wang et al., 2011, p. 312). Researchers have argued that customer mistreatment behaviors impair the service relationship between service employees and customers, leading to negative outcomes for service employees, service organizations, and customers themselves (Harris & Reynolds, 2003).

Researchers have studied customer mistreatment with a range of different theoretical perspectives, conceptualizations, and methodologies (see Koopmann et al., 2015). Researchers in psychology and organizational behavior have investigated the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees’ affect (e.g., anger, strain) and behavior (e.g., counterproductive behavior) (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). Management researchers have examined the impact of customer mistreatment on service employees’ job performance and other organizational outcomes (Groth et al., 2019). Marketing researchers have focused on how service employees’ service delivery failures are related to customers’ dissatisfaction and disappointment that leads to their mistreatment of service employees (Bitner et al., 1990; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002).

To help our understanding of the nature of customer mistreatment, researchers have empirically studied customer mistreatment from three different theoretical perspectives. Affective event theory (AET) (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996) explains how customer mistreatment induces employees' negative emotions at work and subsequently influences employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. AET argues that work events provide a proximal cause of employees' affective responses that in turn leads to their motivation to work, work attitudes and behaviors. Employees acknowledge personally related work events through primary and secondary appraisal processes, which induce their discrete emotions (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996). As a negative work event, customer mistreatment can have a negative impact on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Thus, AET suggests that when service employees perceive customer mistreatment as a significant threat to their self-image or work performance, such mistreatment induces their negative emotions. AET suggests that when service employees are chronically exposed to customer mistreatment, such substantial detrimental behavior is likely to result in their low-arousal, affective consequences and lasting behavioral consequences (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996).

Another theoretical perspective that is often applied to explain the outcomes of customer mistreatment is conservation of resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2002). COR theory argues that individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect their resources. Individuals have personal characteristic resources (e.g., self-esteem, pride in one's work and oneself) and energy resources (e.g., energy, time, and knowledge) (Hobfoll, 1988). A central tenet of COR theory is that the potential or actual loss of these resources can be highly threatening to individuals; in response, people make efforts to replenish resources or minimize their potential loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Individuals' behaviors that prevent the loss of key resources and enable new resources to be gained activate resource protection and resource accumulation

mechanisms (Hobfoll, 2002). If resource losses continue, secondary resource losses occur, which can cause people to sink into a detrimental resource loss spiral (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007; Groth & Grandey, 2012). Previous researchers have adopted a resource-based conceptualization of customer mistreatment because service employees may gain resources from positive customer treatment or lose resources from customer mistreatment (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). Customer mistreatment, such as verbal and physical aggression, is often perceived as stressful work events for service employees. Frequent exposure to customer mistreatment can cause significant resource losses for service employees. As service employees need to continue to interact with customers who mistreat them, they may lack opportunities to gain new resources from resource accumulation mechanisms (Hobfoll, 2002). Moreover, although customer mistreatment breaches the social norms of mutual respect, service employees need to invest additional resources in emotional labor or behavioral regulation to satisfy organizational service rules and customers' expectations for high-quality service (Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). Thus, in addition to the resource loss caused by feelings of stress and anxiety, customer mistreatment further depletes service employees' resources by causing them to invest more resources into maintaining their job responsibilities and customers' expectations. In addition, service employees are bounded by their job responsibilities and organizational service rules and are often unable to simply ignore customer mistreatment episodes, resulting in a secondary resource loss and eventually triggering resource loss spirals (Groth & Grandey, 2012).

A third theoretical perspective that is often applied in customer mistreatment research is justice theories (Bies & Moag, 1986). Service employees often see mistreatment by customers as unfair because it is a breach of social norms and mutual respect. Many customer service researchers have argued that customer mistreatment

creates interpersonal injustice and informational injustice against service employees (see Koopmann et al., 2015). Specifically, service employees perceive interpersonal injustice when customers use disrespectful language or engage in disrespectful behavior. Service employees perceive informational injustice when customers are involved in unclear, dishonest communication during service interactions. When service employees are mistreated by customers, their perception of unfair treatment and the violation of their interpersonal and informational justice can negatively impact their work attitudes and even lead them to engage in retaliatory behaviors against customers (Spencer & Rupp, 2009). For example, previous scholars have shown that customer mistreatment is correlated with service employees' negative emotions (Rupp et al., 2007), sabotage toward customers (Skarlicki et al., 2008), and counterproductive work behavior (Yang & Diefendorff, 2009).

In regard to justice theory, in their comprehensive review of customer mistreatment Koopmann et al. (2015) identified justice theory as one of the underlying theories in the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employee's psychological well-being and work behaviour. However, compared with affective-based theory and resource-based theory, justice theories are less commonly used in customer mistreatment research. Justice theories deserve more attention in customer mistreatment research as service employee's justice perceptions may influence the effect of customer mistreatment on service employee's outcomes. Although I did not use justice theories in my two studies of customer mistreatment, given justice theories may be useful for service researchers and practitioners to understand the impact of customer mistreatment on service employee's outcomes, I still want to discuss justice theories in the current customer mistreatment literature as a part of the literature review in my PhD thesis.

1.2 Empirical Findings of Customer Mistreatment Research

As a pervasive phenomenon in the service industry, previous research has documented a wide range of antecedents and outcomes of customer mistreatment. Customer mistreatment has a negative impact on service employees' affective outcomes. For example, when service employees encounter customer mistreatment, they feel emotionally drained and perceive threats to their sense of control and self-esteem, increasing employee stress and reducing job satisfaction and overall well-being (Poddar & Madupalli, 2012). Researchers have found that customer mistreatment triggers service employees negative emotions and moods (Spencer & Rupp, 2009), which can further develop into employee strain and emotional exhaustion (Hur et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2010). One study investigating the service interactions between nurses and patients showed that negative nurse–patient relationships were the most damaging factor to nurses' job satisfaction and mental well-being (Beaudoin & Edgar, 2003). A study with social care workers in the UK showed that violence from clients reduced employees' job satisfaction (Harris & Leather, 2011). Moreover, Yang and Lau (2019) found that customer incivility reduced service employees' organizational commitment. Similarly, one study with call center employees showed that customer phone rage reduced employees' organizational affective commitment (Harris, 2013).

Moreover, customer mistreatment predicted negative behavioral outcomes of service employees. For example, service employees report increased emotional labor behavior when they receive mistreatment from customers, and this effect is found at both the within-person and between-person levels (Spencer & Rupp, 2009, Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Similarly, an experimental study showed that compared with participants who were not exposed to customer mistreatment, participants who received mistreatment from customers reported more emotional labor (Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Specifically, Gaucher and Chebat (2019) found that service employees' experience of customer

mistreatment was significantly related to increased employees' surface acting toward customers. On the other hand, when service employees encounter customer mistreatment, employees are less engaged in deep acting during service delivery (Kim & Lee, 2014). Sliter et al. (2012) found that bank tellers who encountered customer mistreatment reported more withdrawal behaviors. Similarly, previous researchers have found that customer mistreatment is significantly related to the turnover intentions of restaurant employees (Han et al., 2016) and call center employees (Li & Zhou, 2013).

Furthermore, previous researchers have identified a wide range of antecedents of customer mistreatment. For example, environmental factors in service settings can predict customer mistreatment. Previous researchers have found that environmental factors in airports, such as walking time to the gate, crowdedness, and temperature at the gate, positively predicted customer mistreatment intensity (Agasi et al., 2014). Kao et al. (2014) found that the service climate was negatively associated with customer-related stressors (e.g., working with difficult customers). In addition, affective factors in service interactions can trigger customer mistreatment. For example, previous researchers have found that service employees' hostility was negatively associated with their service performance, which in turn triggered more customer mistreatment (Medler-Liraz & Kark, 2012). Furthermore, service employees' personality traits could influence the occurrence of customer mistreatment. For example, Yang and Diefendorff (2009) found that both conscientiousness and agreeableness were negatively correlated with customer mistreatment. Service employees' perspective taking increases their ability to understand customers' needs, making employees less likely to ascribe customers' negative behaviors to customer mistreatment (Rafaeli et al., 2012; Rupp et al., 2008). In addition, job characteristics play an important role in service employees' work performance, which influences customer mistreatment of employees. Thakor and Joshi

(2005) found that service employees are more likely to be treated well by customers when they have higher job autonomy.

1.3 Organization of the Dissertation and the Contribution of Each Chapter

To examine the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees, I conducted two empirical studies that take different empirical approaches and are presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of my thesis. In one meta-analysis, I critique and synthesize the customer mistreatment literature and identify research gaps and future research directions where evidence is lacking or is of insufficient quality. In addition, my meta-analysis draws robust and broad conclusions about the cumulative evidence on the outcomes of customer mistreatment. The second study is a 10-day field study that investigates how customer mistreatment triggers service employees' emotional exhaustion spirals. I utilize a daily experience-sampling approach with service employees whom I surveyed 3 times a day for 10 consecutive workdays. In this study, I capture the dynamic resource loss mechanisms over time that underlie the relationship between customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion.

Chapter 2 presents a meta-analysis review of customer mistreatment. Compared to other types of review methods (e.g., narrative reviews), meta-analysis has many advantages to provide rigorous and quantitative approach to review and synthesize the customer mistreatment literature (Borenstein et al., 2021). The current literature on customer mistreatment lacks systematic quantitative synthesis. My Meta-analysis study: 1) combined the results of the current primary studies in customer mistreatment, 2) provided a more accurate estimate of the overall effect sizes between customer mistreatment and service employee's outcomes, 3) identified contextual-level moderators that provide information about when or in what conditions service employees may experience more customer mistreatment (Borenstein et al., 2021). This

meta-analysis review included a wide range of behavioral and nonbehavioral forms of customer mistreatment of service employees, such as customer incivility, illegitimate complaints, verbal aggression, and physical aggression (Dormann & Zapf, 2004). I aim to review and statistically synthesize the state of research on the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes.

Although scholarly research on customer mistreatment has proliferated at an increasing rate over the past several decades (see Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021), current findings lack a systematic synthesis of the robustness of the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Thus, to provide the actual magnitude of the effect sizes of these relationships, I used a meta-analytic approach to examine the heterogeneity of customer mistreatment effects on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Specifically, I quantify the true variability of the effect sizes between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes across 70 empirical studies on customer mistreatment. Furthermore, as primary studies are conducted in different contexts, our understanding of how contextual factors can influence the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes is still not clear. I conducted a meta-regression analysis to examine the influence of contextual factors (e.g., service provider type, mean sample age, percentage of females) on the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes across 70 empirical studies. The meta-regression analysis provides empirical evidence of whether the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes vary across different contextual factors, which is an important research question that has not been answered by previous researchers.

Chapter 3 presents a field study that investigates the resource loss mechanisms underlying the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees'

emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. I utilized a daily experience-sampling approach with 76 service employees whom I surveyed 3 times a day for 10 consecutive workdays. Although numerous studies have explored the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' resource loss (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Wang et al., 2011), current research on customer mistreatment adopts a static perspective that assumes that the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees is contained by the temporal or momentary boundary. However, this assumption may not be valid. Once service work starts, even with mistreating customers, service employees are expected to continue to deliver services. To challenge the assumption of a static perspective in the current customer mistreatment research, in Chapter 3, I aim to extend the current research on customer mistreatment by shifting the focus from a static perspective to a dynamic perspective of service interactions. Building on COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), I argue that customer mistreatment significantly depletes service employees' resources while blocking their opportunities for resource gains because they need to continue to interact with mistreating customers. The resource loss caused by customer mistreatment is not only momentary but also can spill over and spiral to have lasting effects on service employees (Dudenhoffer & Dormann, 2013; Groth & Grandey, 2012). Specifically, I empirically examined the spillover mechanism by testing whether the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to employees' negative emotions the next morning. To take a further step, I investigated the spiraling mechanism by testing whether and how service employees' daily experience of customer mistreatment triggers their emotional exhaustion spiral.

Taken together, the two studies in my thesis examined customer mistreatment from different theoretical perspectives. Using meta-analysis and the experience-sampling method, this thesis sheds light on the negative effect of customer mistreatment by

providing integrative and robust examinations of the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employee outcomes. In addition, this thesis advances the customer mistreatment literature by studying the spiraling and spillover effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' well-being.

1.4 Philosophical Foundation of the Dissertation

Different philosophical foundations have different ontological assumptions, paradigms, epistemologies and methodologies. Management research is conducted under different philosophical foundations of social science, such as positivism, interpretive social science, post positivism, feminism, and critical social science. Lazarus (1999) argued that researchers and theorists should clarify their philosophical approach to science and their view of humanity to those who read their works. I developed my thesis based on positivist philosophy. There are some differences between positivism and other philosophical foundations. Rather than being normative, positivism aims to reveal causal regularities that underlie surface reality (Donaldson, 2005). Moreover, to understand human behaviors, I adopted an epistemology that most positivist research used to create general theories about organizations and their members (Donaldson, 2005). Thus, the current thesis followed a positivist philosophy to understand the influence of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Specifically, following Popper (1959), I formed deduced hypotheses from theories in two studies of this thesis. To subject the theory to falsification, I tested these hypotheses against empirical evidence. Compared to other philosophical approaches, a positivistic approach to study customer mistreatment has several advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, positivistic approach employs rigorous research methods to minimize bias and increase the validity of my research findings in customer mistreatment, which provides more reliable information for

researchers and practitioners. Besides, positivistic approach can increase the generalizability of my findings in customer mistreatment, which provides information about the replicability of my research findings across different context and populations (Neuman, 2013). On the other hand, positivistic approach presents several disadvantages comparing with other philosophical approaches. The positivistic approach may be limited by its focus on observable and measurable phenomena in customer mistreatment, which may miss the subjective or qualitative aspects of customer mistreatment. Positivistic approach focuses on measurable variables and statistical relationships in customer mistreatment, which may miss significant environmental factors that shape the customer mistreatment phenomenon and simplify the complex relationship between customer mistreatment and service employee's outcomes (Neuman, 2013).

Chapter 2: A Meta-analysis of the Impact of Customer

Mistreatment on Affective and Behavioral Employee Outcomes

2.1 Abstract

Although service researchers have long suggested that customer mistreatment adversely impacts service employees' outcomes, statistical integration of current empirical findings has been lacking. The aim of this meta-analysis is to review and statistically synthesize the state of research on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. I included 93 effect sizes of 80 independent samples from 70 primary studies ($N = 24,708$). I used a meta-analytic approach to conduct a quantitative review on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Meta-regression was applied to explore the impact of contextual-level moderators (i.e., service provider type, mean sample age, percentage of female employees) on these relationships. Furthermore, I compared the effects of customer mistreatment with the effects of other work-related stressors (i.e., challenge-related stressors and hindrance-related stressors). My results show that customer mistreatment has a significant negative impact on service employees' affective outcomes (i.e., reduced job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased stress) and behavioral outcomes (i.e., increased emotional labor, increased surface acting, increased turnover intention, and increased work withdrawal). Additionally, the relationship of customer mistreatment with service employees' organizational commitment is influenced by a contextual-level moderator (i.e., service provider type). Furthermore, my meta-analysis results showed that the effect sizes between customer mistreatment and employees' outcomes ranged from moderately small to moderately large. My findings advance the customer mistreatment literature by providing meta-analytic evidence of the effects of customer

mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. My meta-analysis provides an overarching understanding of the role of service provider type on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes. The comparison between customer mistreatment and other job-related and personality-related factors provides some guidance on the magnitude of the effects of customer mistreatment on employees' outcomes. My findings can inform managerial practices to create effective interventions and employee support programs to reduce the negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees.

Keywords: Customer mistreatment, Service employee well-being, Meta-analysis

2.2 Introduction

Frontline service employees often encounter mistreatment from the customers they serve. Popular mantras such as “the customer is always right” and “the customer is king” have contributed to increased customer expectations and a perceived power imbalance in favor of customers (Groth et al., 2019). Customer mistreatment, defined as “low quality interpersonal treatment employees receive from their customers” (Wang et al., 2011, p. 312), is especially prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industry due to the high level of customer interaction (Jung & Yoon, 2018; Wang et al., 2020). Sherwyn and Wagner (2018) report that 66% of female and more than 50% of male service employees in the hospitality industry reported experiencing customer mistreatment in their daily work. Similarly, 87% of service employees working in the Australian fast-food industry report having repeatedly experienced uncivil behavior during work (ABC News, 2018). Anecdotal evidence suggests the occurrence of customer mistreatment has further increased during the global Covid-19 pandemic due to a shortage of staff and products and higher stress levels of customers.

What impact does customer mistreatment have on employees' well-being and behavior? In recent years, research concerning the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes has gained increasing attention. A better understanding of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees is important given the myriad of pernicious affective and behavioral outcomes of customer mistreatment on service employees that have been documented. In their comprehensive narrative review paper of customer mistreatment, Koopmann et al. (2015) identified affective outcomes and behavioural outcomes are most commonly studied service employee's outcomes triggered by customer mistreatment. Some frequently observed negative outcomes of customer mistreatment include service employees' affective outcomes, such as reduced job satisfaction (Bamfo et al., 2018), organizational commitment (Yang & Lau, 2019), and increased stress (Hu et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014). Moreover, customer mistreatment is associated with service employees' behavioral outcomes such as increased emotional labor (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Spencer & Rupp, 2009), higher turnover intentions (Han et al., 2016), and higher work withdrawal (Li & Zhou, 2013). Such empirical findings suggest that instances of customer mistreatment exert a measurable adverse impact on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes.

Although empirical studies in the customer mistreatment literature have repeatedly documented the negative outcomes of customer mistreatment on frontline service employees, current findings lack a systematic synthesis regarding the robustness of the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Thus, a quantitative review examining the heterogeneity of customer mistreatment effects on service employees' outcomes is needed. Quantifying the magnitude of customer mistreatment effects can provide a benchmark against future customer mistreatment research plans when evaluating its design characteristics (e.g., sample size). The quantified magnitude of customer mistreatment effect can also

provide practitioners (e.g., managers) with a sense of the extent to which positive outcomes will result from efforts to reduce customer mistreatment.

In addition, in contrast to the well-documented employee outcomes of customer mistreatment, our understanding of how contextual factors can influence the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes is also unclear. This makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions about the nature of the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes and impedes the development of clear practical implications for management practices. Given that existing empirical studies of customer mistreatment were conducted within a diverse range of service contexts (e.g., different types of service providers and industries), it is important to empirically examine whether the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes vary depending on different contextual factors.

Thus, a meta-analysis of current empirical findings will benefit customer mistreatment research. By synthesizing 70 primary studies of customer mistreatment in a meta-analysis, my paper makes three important contributions to customer mistreatment research. First, I make an empirical contribution by providing robust meta-analytic estimates of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Although the effects between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes have been well studied, the actual magnitude of the effect sizes has not been systematically studied in a meta-analysis. I contribute to the literature by acknowledging the different magnitudes of effect sizes of customer mistreatment on employees' outcomes, as well as the different magnitudes of the effect sizes between customer mistreatment and other job-related and personality-related factors. Second, to explore heterogeneity across studies, I quantify the true variability of the effect sizes between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and

behavioral outcomes across studies. Third, I explore the effects of several contextual-level factors that may account for the variability of effect sizes across empirical studies. Specifically, I examine whether the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes varies across service provider types and socio-demographic characteristics of service samples (i.e., average age and percentage of females).

2.3 Theoretical background and hypotheses development

Customer mistreatment may take a wide range of behavioral and non-behavioral forms. Service employees may encounter customers who treat them in disrespectful, unreasonable, demeaning, or aggressive ways, and customers may also make illegitimate complaints or engage in verbal or physical aggression toward service employees (Dormann & Zapf, 2004). Additionally, researchers have identified closely related concepts such as dysfunctional customer behavior, deviant behavior, and some more intensive forms of customer mistreatment, such as customer rage, violence, sexual harassment, etc. (Grandey et al., 2004; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2009). As discussed by Dormann and Zapf (2004), the range of mistreatment behaviors is often linked to disproportionate or ambiguous customer expectations.

Within the management literature, scholarly research on customer mistreatment has steadily proliferated over the past two decades. Recent narrative review articles have documented different theoretical lenses of customer mistreatment as well as outcomes of customer mistreatment on service employees, especially affective and behavioral outcomes (see Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021). The two main theoretical perspectives that help us to understand the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes are *affective events theory* and *resource theories*, which have been identified as the two most important theoretical

mechanisms underpinning customer mistreatment (cf. Koopmann et al., 2015). In the following, I briefly introduce both of these theoretical perspectives.

2.3.1 Affective events theory

Affective events theory explains how emotions are formed at work and subsequently influence employee performance and well-being. It suggests that external events that occur in an employee's work environment directly influence their internal cognitions, affective reactions, and subsequent work attitudes and work performance (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996). Thus, work events provide a proximal cause of employees' affective reactions. Affective events theory (AET) suggests that both positive work events and negative work events (e.g., customer mistreatment) have a significant psychological impact on service employees' attitudes, motivation, and behaviors. More detrimentally, when service employees are exposed to negative work events, such as customer mistreatment, it likely reduces their well-being (Baranik et al., 2017).

In support of affective events theory, a large body of evidence has demonstrated the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective activities and well-being. For example, Rupp and Spencer (2006) found that participants who received customer mistreatment engaged in more emotional labor than those participants who were not mistreated by customers. Yue et al. (2017) showed that customer mistreatment significantly predicted service employees' negative emotions and moods. Poddar and Madupalli (2012) argued that customer mistreatment negatively impacts service employee's overall well-being, job satisfaction, and stress. In short, previous empirical studies have demonstrated that, as an affective event, customer mistreatment can trigger strong negative affective states in employees (Grandey, et al., 2002; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Rupp et al., 2008), which in return negatively influence their work attitude and performance.

2.3.2 Resource theory

Another prominent stream of research has conceptualized customer mistreatment as a resource-depleting event (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Koopmann et al., 2015). Specifically, Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources (COR) theory argues that individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect their resources. Individuals' behaviors to prevent the loss of key resources and to gain new resources activate two different mechanisms, namely, resource protection mechanisms and resource accumulation mechanisms (Hobfoll, 2002). Hobfoll et al. (2018) illustrate that a resource loss or failure to gain key resources triggers people's psychological reactions (i.e., stress, anxiety), which can motivate people to prevent further resources loss. If resource loss continues, secondary resource loss occurs, which can result in a detrimental resource loss spiral (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007; Groth & Grandey, 2012). To accumulate new resources, individuals must invest their current resources to gain new resources from their environment (Hobfoll, 2002).

Customer mistreatment events, such as customer verbal aggression and physical aggression, are often perceived as stressful work events for service employees and thus pose a significant trigger of resource loss. Moreover, although customer mistreatment breaches the social norms of mutual respect, service employees need to invest additional resources in emotional labor or behavioral regulation to satisfy organizational display rules and customers' expectations for high-quality service (Grandey et al., 2007; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). Thus, in addition to the resource loss caused by feelings of stress and anxiety, customer mistreatment further depletes service employees' resources by investing more resources into maintaining their job responsibilities and customers' expectations. Besides, service employees are bound by their job responsibilities and emotional display rules, and they are often not able to simply remove themselves from

customer mistreatment episodes, which results in a secondary resource loss and eventually triggers resource loss spirals (Groth & Grandey, 2012). As service employees need to continue to interact with mistreating customers, they may lack opportunities to gain new resources from resource accumulation mechanisms (Hobfoll, 2002).

2.3.3 Customer mistreatment and service employees' affective outcomes

Drawing on the basic premise of affective event theory discussed above (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996), much of customer mistreatment research has focused on the questions of whether and what type of negative affective consequences customer mistreatment has on service employees. For example, Poddar and Madupalli (2012) found that service employees who encountered customer mistreatment perceived threats to their self-esteem, which negatively influenced their overall well-being, job satisfaction, and stress. A study with UK social care staff found that client violence reduced employees' job satisfaction and increased employees' stress symptoms (Harris & Leather, 2011). Bamfo et al. (2018) found that abusive customer behavior has a negative and significant effect on service employees' job satisfaction. A study with service employees in resort retail stores found that customer incivility is negatively related to service employees' organizational commitment (Yang & Lau, 2019). Similarly, Harris (2013) found that call center employees' perceptions of customer phone rage reduced employees' organizational affective commitment. Furthermore, Hu et al. (2017) demonstrated that customer mistreatment positively related to cabin crew's role stress. Finally, Kim et al. (2014) found that guest-contact employees in hospitality organizations reported increased job stress and decreased job satisfaction when they received customer incivility. In sum, given that ample empirical evidence has linked the

negative impact of customer mistreatment to a variety of service employees' affective outcomes, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Customer mistreatment has a negative impact on service employees' affective outcomes. Specifically, it is a) negatively related to job satisfaction, b) negatively related to organizational commitment, and c) positively related to stress.

2.3.4 Customer mistreatment and service employees' behavioral outcomes

In response to customer mistreatment, service employees often adapt their behavior to deal with the negative impact of customer mistreatment. Given that service employees may not be able to just walk away and remove themselves from the situation when an interaction involves mistreatment, they often engage in emotional labor to deal with customer mistreatment (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hochschild, 1983). Consistent with conservation of resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), when service employees encounter customer mistreatment, they often engage in behaviors to protect their resources and prevent further resource loss from dealing with customer mistreatment. For example, research—at both a within-person and a between-person level—has shown that service employees increase their usage of emotional labor in response to customer mistreatment episodes (Spencer & Rupp, 2009; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Gaucher and Ghebat (2019) showed that shopper incivility toward frontline retail employees was significantly related to service employees' anger and increased employees' surface acting toward shoppers. On the other hand, Kim and Lee (2014) found customer mistreatment to be negatively correlated with service employees' deep acting. Moreover, Han et al. (2016) found customer incivility to be significantly related to turnover intentions of restaurant frontline service employees, whereas Li and Zhou (2013) demonstrated that customer verbal aggression predicted call center employees' turnover intentions. Similarly, Sliter et al. (2012) showed that customer incivility predicted increased withdrawal behaviors of bank tellers. Given the persistent evidence

of the negative impact of customer mistreatment on a variety of service employees' behavioral outcomes, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Customer mistreatment has a negative impact on service employees' behavioral outcomes. Specifically, it is a) positively related to combined emotional labor, b) positively related to surface acting, c) negatively related to deep acting, d) positively related to turnover intentions, and e) positively related to work withdrawal.

2.3.5 The magnitude of customer mistreatment effect on service employees

As I argued above, customer mistreatment is likely to have a negative impact on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes because service employees often perceive customer mistreatment as stressful work events that drains their personal resources. Although numerous primary studies have documented the negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal; Bamfo et al., 2018; Han et al., 2016; Li & Zhou, 2013; Yang & Lau, 2019), service researchers and managers would benefit from robust estimates of the magnitude of the effects of customer mistreatment on employees' outcomes and how they compare to other organizational factors. As a unique type of stressful work event encountered by employees, it advances our understanding of the effect sizes of customer mistreatment on employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Thus, one research goal of my meta-analysis study is:

Research Goal: To meta-analytically estimate the magnitude of the effects of customer mistreatment on employees' affective and behavioral outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal).

2.3.6 The influence of contextual-level moderators on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes

Although prior service research has been conducted within a very diverse set of service contexts (i.e., retail and hospitality employees, professional and medical staff, firefighters, and police officers etc.), contextual-level moderators on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes have only received scant attention in the service management and marketing literatures. Despite an occasional focus of individual- and organizational-level moderators in specific primary studies, there is little systematic understanding of whether the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes differ across primary studies as a result of the types of service contexts. Yet, age and gender have long been considered important socio-demographic variables in management and organizational psychology research (Cohen, 1993; Griffeth et al., 2000; Sturman, 2003). Service employees' gender and age may impact their perceptions of service interactions in that, when customer mistreatment happens, service employees' reactions may vary due to gender role socialization, decoding ability, and differences in information processing (Brody & Hall, 1993; Dittmar et al., 2004). Despite these individual-level effects of employees' age and gender on their affective activities and behaviors, the current service literature has not systematically studied whether the effects of customer mistreatment within the context of employee samples consisting of older employees and a higher proportion of females differs from contexts consisting of younger employees and low proportion of females. Compared with males and older employees, females and younger employees usually tend to occupy lower-paid and lower-status frontline service positions due to stereotypical roles to be caring and emotionally expressive to others (Fleming, 2017; Hochschild, 1983; Mattila et al., 2003). This stereotypical view towards female and younger service employees contributes to an increased power imbalance and increased

customer expectations in favor of the customer, which increases the potential for customer mistreatment.

To investigate the impact of service provider type, mean sample age, and percentage of females, I conducted meta-regression analysis with primary studies to explore the effects of contextual-level moderators (i.e., service provider type, mean sample age, and percentage of female) on the relationship between customer mistreatment and employee affective and behavioral outcomes. This examination addresses the fundamental but unanswered question of whether the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes differs depending on contextual-level variables across primary studies. A better understanding of the impact of the contextual-level moderating effect of these variables will help researchers to better understand the reasons behind the often-divergent results of the effects of customer mistreatment observed in the literature.

2.3.7 Service provider type as contextual-level moderator

Service interactions between customers and service employees are often driven by the nature and dynamics of the service context in which the interaction takes place. In this paper, I focus on service provider type as an essential contextual-level moderator because research suggests that the nature of services determines the interactions between service employees and customers. Johns (2006) argues that context explains why people behave differently in different organizational contexts. Service interactions between service employees and customers are likely to vary depending on different contexts. In this vein, Singh et al. (2017) argue that what happens during service interactions can be conceptualized in regard to its variety, multiplicity, and complexity. Studying the effect of contextual-level variables, such as the percentage of females, average age, as well as service provider type, can provide empirical evidence that

indicates in what conditions, customer mistreatment is most likely to occur. For example, researchers can test whether the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes and behavioral outcomes varies depending on the percentage of female participants in a study, the average age of participants in a study, and the service provider type in a study.

Previous research has demonstrated the importance of differentiating service provider types in customer service research (Grandey & Diamond, 2010; Gutek et al., 1999). For example, services differ in terms of the level of contact between service employees and customers. Service interactions that require a high degree of employee-customer interaction (i.e., hairdressers, accountants, or doctors) largely differ from service interactions that require a low degree of employee-customer interaction (i.e., restaurant or call center employees). Relatedly, Coulter and Ligas (2004) found that the nature of relationships between employees and customers in hair care services were more likely to be friendly, whereas the nature of relationships between employees and customers in healthcare and financial services were more likely to be professional. Besides, familiarity between customers and service employees often characterizes the nature of service interactions. Service contexts where customers and service employees are familiar with each other are often associated with a number of benefits, such as more social support, greater empathy, and higher commitment. In contrast, in service context where customers and service employees are not familiar with each other, service interactions may be related to low intrinsic motivation and more customer mistreatment (Grandey & Diamond, 2010; Gutek et al., 1999).

Since services are heterogeneous in nature (Cook et al., 1999), differentiating between specific service characteristics plays an important role in customer service research. In this study, I draw on Silvestro et al.'s (1992) framework of service classification which is conceptually based on six contextual characteristics. Silvestro et

al. (1992) argue that services are different in terms of management concerns, service strategy, as well as control and performance measurements. Based on these contextual characteristics of different service providers, Silvestro et al. (1992) classify service providers along six contextual characteristics: 1) equipment focus versus people focus, 2) customer contact time per transaction, 3) degree of customization, 4) degree of discretion, 5) value-added back office versus value-added front office, and 6) product focus versus process focus. By comparing these contextual characteristics, the authors suggest three overarching types of service providers: (1) professional services: “organizations with relatively few transactions, highly customized, process-oriented, with relatively long contact time, with most value-added in the front office, where considerable judgment is applied in meeting customer needs.”(e.g., management consultancy, law firms, hospitals, etc.); (2) mass services: “organizations where there are many customer transactions, involving limited contact time and little customization. The offering is predominantly product-oriented with most value being added in the back office and little judgment applied by the front office staff” (e.g., convenience stores, fast food restaurant, etc.); and (3) service shops: “a categorization which falls between professional and mass services with the levels of the classification dimensions falling between the other two extremes.” (e.g., hotel, department store, etc.) (Silvestro et al., 1992, p. 73).

As professional services are highly customized with a relatively long contact time compared with service shops, I argue that professional service employees tend to have a stronger relationship with their customers than service shop employees. The strength of the relationship between service employees and customers reflects the contact frequency and rapport between employees and customers (De Cannière et al., 2009; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). With a strong relationship between service employees and customers, employees are more likely to be familiar with customers, and their service relationships

are more likely to endure and less vulnerable to breakdown (Barnes, 1997). In professional services, service employees usually need to provide highly customized services, which require employees and customers to interact for longer durations than in mass services and service shops. Thus, employees in professional services are less likely to process information that contradicts employees' existing views and beliefs about their customers. This is consistent with research on confirmation bias which describes individuals' tendencies to favor information that confirms their existing beliefs (Nickerson, 1998). When professional services employees encounter customer mistreatment, the relatively stronger service relationships enable them to process information in ways that do not threaten their relationships with customers. Thus, professional service employees may be more inclined to overlook or dismiss signs of customer mistreatment.

In contrast, when service shop employees encounter customer mistreatment, the relatively weaker service relationships with their customers are less constrained by existing beliefs. Thus, service shop employees are more likely to interpret customer mistreatment as negative service events which can lead to negative outcomes for service employees. In addition, professional service employees usually need to provide highly customized services to customers, which require a high level of personal contact between service employees and customers. On the other hand, service shop employees do not provide highly customized services to customers, and service deliveries with the context of service shops usually prioritize speed, reliability, efficiency, and lower price (Bowen, 1990; Lovelock, 1983), rather than personal contact and building relationships between employees and customers. Given that personal contact and treatment between service employees and customers can be considered particularly important in professional services, I argue that professional service employees are less likely to be adversely impact by mistreatment they receive from customers. In contrast, customers

in service shop services usually focus on speed, reliability, efficiency, and lower price rather than the quality of interpersonal contact, and compared with professional service employees, service shop employees are more likely to be adversely affected by any mistreatment they received from customers. In short, by applying Silvestro et al.'s (1992) framework of service provider type to the context of customer mistreatment, I propose that the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes varies depending on type of service context in which they take place.

Hypothesis 3: The negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes (job satisfaction (a), organizational commitment (b), and stress (c)) as well as behavioral outcomes (combined emotional labor (d), surface acting (e), deep acting (f), turnover intentions (g), and withdrawal behavior (h)) is weaker in professional services contexts than in service shop contexts.

2.3.8 Average age and proportion of female as contextual-level moderators.

Building on previous research on age and gender as individual-level predictors of customer mistreatment, I examine sample mean age and percentage of females as contextual-level moderators in this meta-analysis. Previous research suggested that compared to male service employees, female service employees may use different coping strategies to cope with customer mistreatment and gender role stereotypes during service interactions (Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008). By integrating conservation of resource (COR) theory, females may deplete more resources than males due to the differences in their resource allocation among males and females. Thus, different resource allocation among female service employees and male service employees can lead to greater negative impact on affective and behavioral outcomes in contexts with higher percentage of female service employees. Different from what you suggested, I argue that older service employees or employees with longer service experience may have more resources and better coping strategies to deal with the negative impact of

customer mistreatment. Besides, more effective coping strategies for dealing with customer mistreatment may be developed when employee age.

Average age. I investigate the moderation effect of mean sample age on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes because age is regarded as a theoretically important predictor of customer mistreatment (Johnson et al., 2013). Research has shown that people regulate their social interactions by maximizing the experience of positive and minimizing the experience of negative emotions when they age (Charles & Carstensen, 2007; Ready & Robinson, 2008). Thus, older people minimize social and emotional risks by intensifying existing relationships, striving for emotional satisfaction and maximizing social and emotional gains, as well as dissociating themselves from annoying and irritating relationships (Carstensen et al., 1999). Besides, previous research indicates that, compared to younger people, older people cope more successfully with negative social interactions (Blanchard-Fields, 2007). Beitler et al. (2016) argue that older service employees are more likely to apply passive avoidant (avoiding) and active constructive (problem-solving) conflict management strategies when they encountered customer mistreatment. They found that older service employees report more professional efficacy than younger service employees in avoiding conflicts with customers. Thus, given that older service employees tend to minimize social and emotional risk, they are more effective in managing conflict with customers during service interactions. As older service employees are more capable of dealing with customer mistreatment, I predict that service contexts involving older service employees might be less adversely affected by customer mistreatment. Therefore, I argue that:

Hypothesis 4: The negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes (job satisfaction (a), organizational commitment (b), stress (c)) and behavioral outcomes (combined emotional labor (d), surface acting (e), deep acting (f), turnover intentions (g), and withdrawal behavior (h)) is weaker in service contexts involving employee samples with higher mean

age than in service context where consisting employee samples with lower mean age.

Percentage of female. Research related to gender differences and service employees' perceptions of customer mistreatment has been somewhat unclear. Johnson and Schulman (1988) argue that in situations that are oriented toward others, females are more likely to be expected to express positive emotions compared to males. For example, Kelly and Huston-Comeaus (1999) showed that females are more likely to be expected to express happiness in interpersonal interactions. Babin and Boles (1998) examined gender differences in service employees' behaviors and found that female employees experience relatively higher levels of stress than male employees in the workplace because they tend to experience higher levels of role ambiguity and conflict and engage in more emotional labor. More recently, Grandey (2000) found that females were more likely to manage emotions at work, which is related to increased stress. Although there is no direct evidence on gender differences and service employees' perceptions of customer mistreatment, previous studies on workplace incivility suggests that females are exposed to more workplace incivility compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Cortina et al., 2013). The stereotypical view toward female service employees creates expectations for them to be caring and emotionally expressive during service interactions (Hochschild, 1983; Mattila et al., 2003), which is likely to make female service employees perceive more customer mistreatment. I predict that compared to contexts involving of more male service employees, in contexts involving more female service employees, the customer mistreatment has more adverse affective and behavioral outcomes for service employees.

Hypothesis 5: The negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes (job satisfaction (a), organizational commitment (b), stress (c)) and behavioral outcomes (combined emotional labor (d), surface acting (e), deep acting (f), turnover intentions (g), and withdrawal behavior (h)) is weaker in service contexts involving a lower percentage of female service

employees than in service contexts involving a higher percentage of female service employees.

2.4 Method

2.4.1 Literature Search

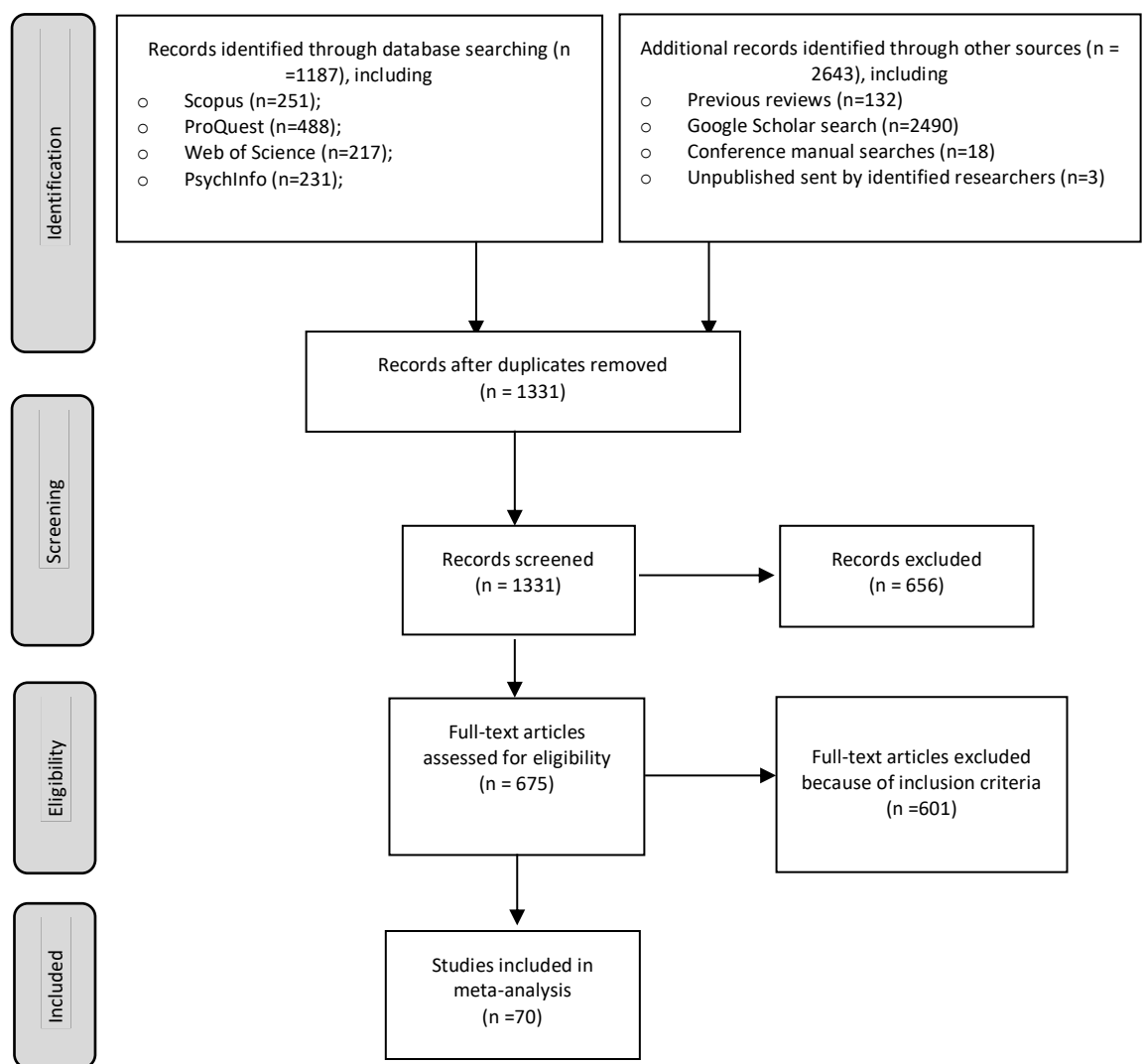
I searched for relevant empirical studies up to September 2019 and applied a fivefold approach to the literature search of customer mistreatment. First, I searched titles, abstracts, and keywords of articles in Proquest, Scopus, Web of science, PsychInfo, and Google Scholar using a long list of keywords (i.e., customer mistreatment, customer aggression, client incivility, etc.); please see the Appendix A for all keywords that were used. Second, I consulted reference sections of two previous review articles on customer mistreatment (Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021). Third, to identify unpublished work, I searched for dissertations in ProQuest using the same keywords. Fourth, I searched the conference programs of the last 10 years of the Academy of Management, Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology. Fifth, I e-mailed 154 customer mistreatment researchers whose name appeared at least once in my database to ask for unpublished work.

2.4.2 Inclusion Criteria

My search yielded a total of 1,331 studies. To be included in this meta-analysis, a study needed to meet the following criteria: (a) it had to include customer mistreatment as a focal construct in the context of customer service; (b) it needed to focus on customer mistreatment in a sample of employees with customer contact; (c) it had to report correlations between customer mistreatment and one of my focal outcome

variables (i.e., service employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, emotional labor, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal); and (d) it had to empirically measure customer mistreatment. On the basis of the above inclusion criteria, I identified and coded 70 primary studies with 80 independent samples and 93 effect sizes ($N = 24,708$). All the primary studies are listed in Appendix B, and a diagram of the meta-analysis screening process is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Diagram of the Meta-analysis Screening Process



Note. n = number of identified articles.

2.4.3 Variable classification

Two authors classified the variables (i.e., customer mistreatment and its outcomes) into different categories to integrate the constructs with similar meanings. Customer mistreatment was defined as the low-quality interpersonal interactions that service employees receive from customers during service exchanges (Bies, 2001; Wang et al., 2011). But it is referred to by various terms across the studies, including “customer incivility” and “customer aggression”. To include a broad set of samples in my analysis, I classified the variables with different construct labels into one general variable (Bosco et al., 2017). I computed Cohen’s Kappa to assess congruence in the rater’s classifications of customer mistreatment. Overall, agreement among the coders was high (Cohen’s kappa = .92). Additionally, coding discrepancies were addressed through discussion and reexamination of the data.

2.4.4 Coding of Studies

I followed Krippendorff (2012)’s coding scheme during the coding process. The authors of this study had regular meetings and worked to achieve coding consensus by resolving coding discrepancies and clarifying ambiguous coding situations. For each primary study, my coding included (a) the sample size, (b) the correlations, (c) the reliability of each variable. When studies provided correlations between multiple facets of customer mistreatment and its outcomes, I used formulae to calculate composite correlations (Ghiselli et al., 1981, pp. 163-164). When a study measured the same relationship with the same sample at different occasions/time points, to avoid double counting of a study, I averaged correlations (also see Clark et al., 2016). To examine the moderating role of service provider type, I adopted Silvestro et al. (1992)’s classification of service providers. Based on six different contextual characteristics, Silvestro et al. (1992) suggest three overarching types of service processes: (1)

professional services (e.g., management consultancy, law firms, hospitals, etc.), (2) service shops (e.g., hotel, department store, etc.), and (3) mass services (e.g., convenience stores, fast food restaurant, etc.). Professional services are defined as services with relatively few transactions, highly customized, process-oriented, with relatively long contact time, with most value added in the front office, where considerable judgement is applied in meeting customers' needs. Mass services are defined as services with many customer transactions, involving limited contact time and little customization. The offering is predominantly product-oriented with most value being added in the back office and little judgement applied by the front office staff. Service shops are defined as services which falls between professional and mass services (Silvestro et al., 1992). I extracted the service provider type of data collection when possible. Service provider type data collection was coded based on available information in the study. When the service provider type was unclear or participants were drawn from several service provider types, I excluded these samples when testing the effect of service provider type. As there were only two samples classified as mass services, I code these two samples as service shops in my meta-regression analysis because service shops and mass service are conceptually similar.

2.4.5 Data Analyses

I applied Hunter and Schmidt's (2004) psychometric meta-analytic approach with random-effects model where I weight each effect size by its corresponding sample size. Moreover, measurement unreliability was corrected in both customer mistreatment and its outcomes using Cronbach's α (when applicable). I reported meta-analytic correlations only when there were at least three samples examining a given relationship, which is consistent with previous meta-analyses (Berry et al., 2007). I address sampling error and internal consistency reliability by reporting corrected correlations and

variability estimates. When studies did not report internal consistency reliability, I used the reliability of a sophisticated study with rigorous study design and large sample size. I report reliability corrected correlations with 80% credibility intervals and 95% confidence intervals (Whitener, 1990). The width of credibility intervals represents the extent of true variability in the relationships across studies; wider credibility intervals indicate that moderators of the relationship at the sample level may exist. Sample size was based on the mean of the sample sizes for each meta-analytic correlation. I also reported both Q statistics and I^2 index to present heterogeneity in the true effect size for each relationship. A significant Q value indicates the existence of significant heterogeneity in the true effect size. The I^2 index indicates heterogeneity in percentage, which reflects the proportion of true variance to total variance across the observed effect estimates (Huedo-Medina et al., 2006). When I^2 index levels fall close to 0%, 25%, 50%, and 75%, respectively, the heterogeneity level can be described as no, low, moderate, and high (Higgins et al., 2003). Thus, significant Q statistics and high values of I^2 suggest a significant level of variability in the effect size, which warrants the existence of moderators. However, Q statistics do not suggest the extent of heterogeneity and only indicates the presence or absence of such heterogeneity. With small numbers of effect sizes in meta-regression analysis, both Q statistics and I^2 index have a low statistical power problem (Huedo-Medina et al., 2006). Given the small number of studies involved in the moderator analyses, I conducted the meta-regression analysis for each moderator separately (rather than simultaneously) in order to obtain more stable estimates of the effects. To examine the moderation effect of three contextual-level moderators (i.e., service provider type, average age, and percentage of females), I applied random effects weighted least squares regression (Wilson, 2005) to provide the most reliable and robust results compared with other alternative methods (Steel & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2002).

2.4.6 Publication Bias Check

To detect the presence of publication bias, I followed Banks et al.'s (2012) recommendations to use Egger's test of intercept (Egger et al., 1997). Publication bias is present if the intercept is significantly different from zero. To evaluate the extent to which an effect size may be over- or underestimated, I applied the trim-and-fill analysis (Duval, 2005) to estimate the amount of publication bias. Specifically, publication bias is minimal if there is a small difference between the observed and adjusted effect size. Publication bias is moderate if the conclusion that customer mistreatment is related to its outcomes stays the same even when the difference between the observed and adjusted effect size is large. Publication bias is severe if the conclusions change as to whether the relationships between customer mistreatment and its outcomes are of a meaningful magnitude. To avoid confounding publication bias and second-order sampling error, I conducted publication bias analysis when the number of effect sizes for a relationship was larger than 10 (Sterne et al., 2011).

2.5 Results

Table 1 summarizes the results of the relations between customer mistreatment and its affective and behavioral outcomes. Meta-analytic results show that customer mistreatment was significantly related to service employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, combined emotional labor, surface acting, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal. However, customer mistreatment was not significantly related to service employees' deep acting.

Table 1: Meta-Analytic Results of Relationships Between Customer Mistreatment and Its Outcomes.

Variables	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>SD_r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>SD_p</i>	80% CV			95% CI			<i>Q</i>	<i>I²</i>	
							<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>				
Affective and well-being															
Job satisfaction	25	8128	-.18	.20	.21	.23	-.50	.09		-.30	-.11		339*	92	
Organizational commitment	12	3861	-.19	.12	.21	.13	-.37	-.05		-.29	-.12		52*	79	
Stress	16	3910	.34	.21	.39	.22	.11	.68		.27	.51		178*	91	
Behavioral															
Combined emotional labor	16	5828	.19	.15	.21	.16	.01	.40		.12	.29		122*	87	
Surface acting	15	3734	.25	.12	.28	.13	.13	.44		.21	.36		54*	74	
Deep acting	9	2136	-.04	.20	-.05	.23	-.35	.25		-.23	.12		73*	89	
Turnover intention	28	7855	.30	.13	.34	.16	.15	.52		.28	.40		165*	83	
Work withdrawal	10	2638	.12	.18	.18	.14	.02	.35		.08	.28		39*	77	

Note. *k* = number of samples; *N* = number of participants; *r* = sample-size-weighted mean observed correlation; *SD_r* = standard deviation of *r*; *p* = *r* corrected for unreliability; *SD_p* = standard deviation of *p*; *CI* = credibility interval of *p*; *CV* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit. *Q* = *Q* statistics, a significant value indicates significant heterogeneity in the true effect size that is attributable to true population differences. *I*² index is an indicator of heterogeneity reflecting the proportion of true variance to total variance across the observed effect estimates, where the heterogeneity level can be described as no, low, moderate, and high when the *I*² index levels fall close to 0%, 25%, 50%, and 75%, respectively. * *p* < .05.

2.5.1 Relative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes

Results of the analyses testing my study hypotheses are summarized in Table 1. Hypothesis 1 suggests that customer mistreatment has a negative impact on service employees' affective outcomes. Specifically, I proposed that customer mistreatment is negatively related to job satisfaction (Hypothesis 1a), negatively related to organizational commitment (Hypothesis 1b), and positively related to stress (Hypothesis 1c). As reported in Table 1, customer mistreatment is negatively related to service employees' job satisfaction ($p = -.21$, $SD_p = .23$, $k = 25$), negatively related to service employees' organizational commitment ($p = -.21$, $SD_p = .13$, $k = 12$), and positively related to service employees' stress ($p = .39$, $SD_p = .22$, $k = 16$). As the 95% confidence interval of these estimated relationships excludes zero, these results suggest that Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c were supported.

2.5.2 Relative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' behavioral outcome

Hypothesis 2 suggests that customer mistreatment has a negative impact on service employees' behavioral outcomes. Specifically, I predicted that customer mistreatment is positively related to service employees' combined emotional labor (Hypothesis 2a), positively related to surface acting (Hypothesis 2b), negatively related to deep acting (Hypothesis 2c), positively related to turnover intentions (Hypothesis 2d), and positively related to work withdrawal (Hypothesis 2e). As shown in Table 1, my results largely confirm these hypotheses. Customer mistreatment was positively related to service employees' combined emotional labor ($p = .21$, $SD_p = .16$, $k = 16$), surface acting ($p = .28$, $SD_p = .13$, $k = 15$), turnover intentions ($p = .34$, $SD_p = .16$, $k = 28$), and work withdrawal ($p = .18$, $SD_p = .14$, $k = 10$). As the 95% confidence interval for

Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2d, 2e excludes zero, these results support Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2d, and 2e. However, customer mistreatment was not significantly related to service employees' deep acting ($p = -.05$, $SD_p = .23$, $k = 9$), as the 95% confidence interval of this estimated relationships includes zero. Thus, Hypothesis 2c was not supported.

2.5.3 The magnitude of effect sizes of customer mistreatment on employees' affective and behavioral outcomes

My meta-analytic results in Table 1 showed the magnitude of effect sizes of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes and behavioral outcomes. To interpret the effect sizes of customer mistreatment on employees' outcomes, I used benchmarks developed by Cohen (1988). My results showed that the effect sizes between customer mistreatment on employees' outcomes vary between moderately small to moderately large. Specifically, the effect sizes for employee stress ($p = .39$) and turnover intention ($p = .34$) are moderately large; the effect size of employee surface acting ($p = .28$) is moderate; and the effect sizes of employee job satisfaction ($p = -.21$), organizational commitment ($p = -.21$), combined emotional labor ($p = .21$) and work withdrawal ($p = .18$) are relatively small.

2.5.4 Service provider type as contextual moderator

Hypothesis 3 suggests that service provider type moderates the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective outcomes and behavioral outcomes in that the effect is likely to be more adverse for service shop employees (e.g., hotel, call center) than professional service employees (e.g., healthcare). Specifically, I predicted that service provider type moderates the relations of customer mistreatment with job satisfaction (Hypothesis 3a), organizational commitment (Hypothesis 3b), stress (Hypothesis 3c), combined emotional labor (Hypothesis 3d), surface acting

(Hypothesis 3e), deep acting (Hypothesis 3f), turnover intentions (Hypothesis 3g), and work withdrawal (Hypothesis 3h).

As shown in Table 1, the relationships of customer mistreatment with employee job satisfaction ($Q = 339, P < .001; I^2 = 92$), employee organizational commitment ($Q = 52, P < .001; I^2 = 79$), employee stress ($Q = 178, P < .001; I^2 = 91$), combined employee emotional labor ($Q = 122, P < .001; I^2 = 87$), employee surface acting ($Q = 54, P < .001; I^2 = 74$), employee deep acting ($Q = 73, P < .001; I^2 = 89$), employee turnover intentions ($Q = 165, P < .001; I^2 = 83$), and employee work withdrawal ($Q = 39, P < .001; I^2 = 77$) had considerable between-study variance, thereby warranting a search for moderators.

Table 2 shows results for the meta-regression analysis of service provider type. I found that relative to professional services, service shop service strengthened the relations of customer mistreatment with service employees' organizational commitment. As predicted, the effect on organizational commitment is smaller for professional service employees ($r = -.07$) than for service shop employees ($r = -.26$). In addition, I found that the effect on surface acting is larger for professional service employees ($r = .39$) than for service shop employees ($r = .22$). Moreover, I found that the effect on deep acting for professional service employees ($r = .14$) is opposite to service shop employees ($r = -.13$). These results support Hypotheses 3b. However, my results indicate that service provider type does not significantly moderate the relationship between customer mistreatment and job satisfaction, stress, combined emotional labor, turnover intention, and work withdrawal. Besides, the results for surface acting and deep acting were not consistent with my prediction. Thus, Hypotheses 3a, 3c, 3d, 3e, 3f, 3g and 3h were not supported.

Table 2: Meta-Regression Results of Service Provider Type on Relationship Between Customer Mistreatment and Its Outcomes

	Affective and well-being outcomes			Behavioral outcomes				
	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment	Stress	Emotional labor	Surface acting	Deep acting	Turnover intention	Work withdrawal
Intercept	-.17*	-.07*	.23	.26*	.39*	.14	.21*	.22*
Service provider type	.00	-.19*	.01	-.01	-.17*	-.27*	.12	-.08
Q_H	278*	18*	104*	136*	35*	50*	110*	32%
F	.00	15.06*	.02	.01	9.87*	6.72*	3.68	1.25
R^2	.2%	81%	.53%	.13%	50.81%	38.22%	15.73%	16.48%
k_m	23	11	12	15	14	9	25	9

Note. $Q_H = Q$ statistics, a significant value indicates significant heterogeneity in the true effect with meta-regression; $F = F$ statistics, a significant value indicates significant moderation effect in the true effect; service provider type (1 = professional service, 2 = service shop); k_m = number of samples with meta-regression. * $p < .05$.

2.5.5 Average age and percentage of female as contextual-level moderators

Hypotheses 4 and 5 suggest that the average age and percentage of females moderate the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Specifically, the negative effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes are weaker for samples with older employees and higher proportion of females than samples with younger employees and lower proportion of females. However, meta-regression analysis results of average percentage of female in Table 3 show that average percentage of females did not significantly moderate the strength of the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective outcomes or behavioral outcomes. Similarly, meta-regression analysis results of average age across samples in Table 4 show that average age across samples did not significantly moderate the strength of most relationships estimated in my study. Although I found that the relationship between customer mistreatment and surface acting was significantly moderated by average age, the result was not consistent with my prediction. After converting back into correlation coefficients, the effect size estimate ($r = .36$) at a 1 SD above the mean (average age = 33.58) was higher than the effect size estimate ($r = .20$) at 1 SD low below the mean (average age = 33.58). Thus, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were not supported.

2.5.6 Publication bias

Table 4 presents the results of Egger's test and the trim-and-fill analyses. My analysis shows that there is little to no evidence of publication bias, and the differences between meta-analysis and trim and fill effect size were generally small in magnitude (ranging from .00 to .06). This confirmed my conclusions about the examined relationships in my meta-analysis.

Table 3: Meta-Regression Results of Average Percentage of Female on Relationship Between Customer Mistreatment and Its Outcomes

	Affective and well-being outcomes			Behavioral outcomes				
	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment	Stress	Emotional labor	Surface acting	Deep acting	Turnover intention	Work withdrawal
Intercept	.04	.28	.13	.38*	.40*	.17	.37*	.23*
Average percentage of female participants across samples	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Q_H	282*	31*	179*	93*	37*	76*	136*	31*
F	2.08	1.00	.71	1.62	4.6	.81	.45	.71
R^2	2.23%	2.22%	10.16%	6.03%	37.23%	0%	4.21%	20.39%
k_m	20	10	14	13	14	9	23	9

Note. $Q_H = Q$ statistics, a significant value indicates significant heterogeneity in the true effect with meta-regression; $F = F$ statistics, a significant value indicates significant moderation effect in the true effect; k_m = number of samples with meta-regression. * $p < .05$.

Table 4: Meta-Regression Results of Average Age Across Samples on Relationship Between Customer Mistreatment and Its Outcomes

	Affective and well-being outcomes			Behavioral outcomes				
	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment	Stress	Emotional labor	Surface acting	Deep acting	Turnover intention	Work withdrawal
Intercept	-.30	-.21	.39	.03	-.20	-.20	.15	.37*
Average age across samples	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01*	.00	.00	.00
Q_H	184*	30	123*	127*	25*	73*	106*	25*
F	.18	.08	.02	1.15	5.60*	.38	.96	2.44
R^2	5.97%	6.81%	8.57%	7.49%	68.92%	4.46%	3.67%	39.69%
k_m	20	10	15	16	14	9	22	9

Note. Q_H = Q statistics, a significant value indicates significant heterogeneity in the true effect with meta-regression; F = F statistics, a significant value indicates significant moderation effect in the true effect; k_m = number of samples with meta-regression. * $p < .05$.

Table 5: Results from Meta-Analysis, Egger's Test of The Intercept, and Trim and Fill Analysis

Variables	Meta-analysis results		Egger's test		Trim and fill results		Mean r Difference between meta-analysis and trim and fill	
	<i>k</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>B</i> ₀	Mean <i>r</i>	95% CI	# of outliers		
Job satisfaction	25	-.18	-.20	-.18	-.26, -.09	0		.00
Organizational commitment	12	-.19	-.25	-.18	-.25, -.12	0		.01
Stress	16	.34	.80***	.32	.22, .42	0		.02
Emotional labor	16	.19	.21	.25	.17, .33	0		.06
Surface acting	15	.25	.16	.24	.18, .31	4		.01
Deep acting	9	-.04	-.23	-.06	-.20, .07	2		.02
Turnover behavior	28	.30	.52*	.33	.28, .38	3		.03
Work withdrawal	10	.12	.08	.15	.07, .23	2		.03

Notes. *K*= number of samples; *r*=sample-size-weighted mean observed correlation; CI = confidence interval. ****p*<.001; **p*<.05 Egger's test = Egger's test of intercept; *B*₀ intercept from Egger's test of the intercept.

2.6 Discussion

The main aim of my study was to provide meta-analytic evidence of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes. Service scholars have long suggested that customer mistreatment has a negative impact on service employees' outcomes (Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021), although a meta-analysis of current empirical findings has been lacking. In addition, given the diversity of empirical findings within the literature, I set out to better understand how contextual factors impact the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes and how they might explain the wide range of results. My meta-analytic results show that customer mistreatment is significantly related to reduced employee job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased stress. In terms of behavioral outcomes, my results confirm that customer mistreatment is significantly related to an increased use of combined emotional labor and surface acting but not to deep acting. In addition, I found that customer mistreatment to be significantly related to increased turnover intentions and work withdrawal. Indeed, as a negative affective service event, customer mistreatment not only correlates with service employees' negative affective outcomes, but also likely depletes employees' psychological resources to deal with it (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Consistent with affective event theory (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996), my results show that customer mistreatment might be a proximal cause of service employees' affective and behavioral reactions (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, and emotional labor; Bamfo et al., 2018; Hu et al., 2017; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Spencer & Rupp, 2009; Yang & Lau, 2019). Furthermore, to reserve resources and prevent future resource loss (Hobfoll et al., 2018), service employees may cope with customer mistreatment by engaging in withdrawal

behaviors (e.g., turnover intentions and work withdrawal; Han et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2012).

To my knowledge, my meta-analysis is not only the first to provide integrative meta-analytic evidence of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes but also to systematically test the influence of several key contextual-level moderators across numerous primary studies. The results show that, compared with service shop employees, the impact of customer mistreatment on organizational commitment is weaker for professional service employees. However, the same result was not detected for employee job satisfaction, stress, combined emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, or turnover intention and work withdrawal.

I further predicted that the average age and percentage of females moderate the relationship between customer mistreatment and affective and behavioral outcomes for service employees. However, my meta-regression results were not in line with my hypotheses suggesting that, in the context where samples consist of older employees and having a higher proportion of females, these characteristics did not mitigate the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes and behavioral outcomes.

2.6.1 Theoretical Contribution

Given the burgeoning attention customer mistreatment research has attracted (Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021), my study provides four important contributions to the customer mistreatment literature. First, the current meta-analysis represents the comprehensive, in-depth synthesis of 70 studies with 80 independent samples and 93 effect sizes ($N = 24,708$). I systematically synthesized the customer mistreatment literature for frontline scholars who are typically distributed across different fields and use different terminology to study customer mistreatment. As a case in point, customer

mistreatment has been variously labelled as dysfunctional customer behavior, deviant behavior, and some more intensive forms of customer mistreatment, such as customer rage, violence, sexual harassment (Grandey et al., 2004; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2009). All these constructs signal that service employees can experience different forms of customer mistreatment, which may lead to various outcomes for service employees. I thus take a broad, inclusive approach to identifying different types of affective and behavioral outcomes of service employees. My study provides robust meta-analytic estimates of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and stress) and behavioral outcomes (i.e., combined emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal).

My meta-analytic results are consistent with affective event theory and resource theory, which are the two main theoretical perspectives that have persistently been invoked in better understanding the nature and theoretical underpinnings of customer mistreatment. (cf. Koopmann et al., 2015). Indeed, as a stressful work event for service employees, customer mistreatment has been shown to serve as the proximal cause to service employees' affective reactions (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996). Given that service employees are bound by their job responsibilities and emotional display rules, they may not be able to simply remove themselves from customer mistreatment, but they most often confront customer mistreatment while staying within strictly organizational behavioral guidelines. This often results in resource loss. Thus, to prevent further resource loss from customer mistreatment, service employees often engage in withdrawal behaviors (Yue et al., 2021).

Second, my meta-analysis quantifies the magnitude of effect sizes of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes, and hence allows us to compare the magnitude of effect sizes of customer mistreatment with other organizational factor for

four common employee work outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and work withdrawal). As a stressful event for service employees, customer mistreatment can adversely influence service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes (Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021). My results indicated that the effects for customer mistreatment were ranged between moderately small to moderately large relative to standard social science benchmarks (Cohen, 1988). By comparing the effect sizes of customer mistreatment on employees' work outcomes, the effect sizes on employee stress ($p = .39$) and turnover intention ($p = .34$) are moderately large; the effect size on employee surface acting ($p = .28$) is moderate; and the effect sizes on employee job satisfaction ($p = -.21$), organizational commitment ($p = -.21$), combined emotional labor ($p = .21$) and work withdrawal ($p = .18$) are moderately small. Thus, the results suggest that reducing customer mistreatment will only have a moderately small impact on reducing employee work withdrawal but a more substantial impact on reducing employee stress and turnover intention. However, it is not clear whether the effects of customer mistreatment on employees' work outcomes differ from other organizational factors. Table 6 compares my customer mistreatment meta-analysis results to those from meta-analyses of several other organizational factors. These factors were selected because I want to show the difference between the effect size of customer mistreatment and the effect size of job-related and personality-related factors on four common employee work outcomes. Table 6 shows that the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' affective outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment) are similar to well-established job-related factors. For example, previous meta-analyses found similar effect size of role ambiguity, role conflict, responsibility, and role overload on employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Cooper-Hakim & Viswevaran, 2005; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). My results suggest that efforts to reduce customer mistreatment could have a

similar impact on employee's affective outcomes as these well-established job-related factors. Furthermore, the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' behavioral outcomes (i.e., turnover intention and work withdrawal) are larger than personality-related factors. For example, previous meta-analyses found smaller effect size of negative affectivity, positive affectivity, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness on employees' turnover intention and work withdrawal (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Thoresen et al., 2003; Zimmerman, 2008). My results indicate that efforts to reduce customer mistreatment could have a larger impact on employees' behavioral outcomes than these well-established personality-related factors. Thus, to mitigate the problems with employee turnover and work withdrawal, organizations not only need to select employees with suitable personality but also need to reduce the negative impact of customer mistreatment on employees' behavioral outcomes.

Table 6: Comparison of Current Customer Mistreatment Meta-Analysis with Prior Meta-Analyses for Employee Affective and Behavioral Outcomes

Outcome Variables	Meta-analysis studies	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Job Satisfaction					
Role ambiguity	Bowling and Hammond (2008)	14	3060	-.34	-.42
Role conflict	Bowling and Hammond (2008)	12	3164	-.26	-.32
Customer mistreatment	Current study	25	8128	-.18	-.21
Responsibility	Cooper-Hakim and Viswevaran (2005)	8	1852	-.13	-.17
Role overload	Bowling and Hammond (2008)	12	3259	-.02	-.03
Organizational Commitment					
Role conflict	Mathieu and Zajac (1990)	24	4989	-.27	-.27
Role ambiguity	Mathieu and Zajac (1990)	21	4528	-.24	-.22
Customer mistreatment	Current study	12	3861	-.19	-.21
Role overload	Mathieu and Zajac (1990)	5	1621	-.14	-.21
Responsibility	Cooper-Hakim and Viswevaran (2005)	9	11670	-.03	-.04
Turnover Intention					
Customer mistreatment	Current study	28	7855	.30	.34
Negative affectivity	Thoresen <i>et al.</i> , 2003	35	8671	.24	.28
Positive affectivity	Thoresen <i>et al.</i> , 2003	18	5327	-.14	-.17
Conscientiousness	Zimmerman (2008)	13	4315	-.12	-.16
Agreeableness	Zimmerman (2008)	10	3527	-.10	-.13
Extraversion	Zimmerman (2008)	25	7231	-.10	-.12
Openness	Zimmerman (2008)	12	3730	.01	.01
Work withdrawal					
Customer mistreatment	Current study	10	2638	.12	.18
Openness	Connor-Smith and Flachsbart (2007)	4	606	.10	
Agreeableness	Connor-Smith and Flachsbart (2007)	4	479	.08	
Extraversion	Connor-Smith and Flachsbart (2007)	6	836	-.05	
Conscientiousness	Connor-Smith and Flachsbart (2007)	4	479	.01	

Third, although researchers have made strides examining the effects of individual- and organizational-level moderators on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes (Koopmann et al., 2015), systematic evidence of the effects of contextual-level moderators on the relationship between customer mistreatment and employee outcomes has been largely absent in the service literature. To remedy this important line of research, my meta-analysis examines and addresses the fundamental but unanswered question of whether the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes differs depending on contextual-level variables across primary studies. My research is the first to comprehensively demonstrate that the strength of association between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes is contingent upon the context of different service providers. Specifically, the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' organizational commitment is more adverse within service contexts involving service shops employees than service contexts involving professional service employees. This indicates that service provider type serves as a contextual factor that moderates the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' organizational commitment. My findings advance theoretical insights regarding the degree to which service context matters for the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes and bring the service literature closer to an overarching understanding of the role of service context in service employees' experience of customer mistreatment. Indeed, given that service providers differ from each other in terms of multiple contextual factors (e.g., level of customization, length of customer contact time; Silvestro et al., 1992), future researcher should further unpack the influence of contextual service within the context of customer mistreatment.

I should note that I did not find significant effects for the sample mean age and percentage of females. In other words, whether the service context is dominated by

female or older service employees does not significantly impact the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Although service employees' experience of customer mistreatment may differ in terms of their gender and age, characteristics of different types of service providers may be a stronger contextual-level moderator that determines the magnitude of the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees. Besides, given the dyadic nature of service interactions, the occurrence of customer mistreatment and the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees might mainly depend on the service interactions within different customer-employee dyads that are not detected at the aggregate level. Thus, it is plausible that the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes is more likely to be influenced by individual-level characteristics within different customer-employee dyads (e.g., personality, familiarity between customer and employee, etc.) rather than the socio-demographic context (i.e., sample mean age and percentage of female). In addition, I found some evidence for how the effect of customer mistreatment on service employee's affective and behavioral outcomes would differ between professional service employees and mass service employees. Further examination of how the percentage of female employees and the average age of the sample changes employees' outcomes of customer mistreatment within the same service provider is a prospective research direction in the future. Although I cannot examine race as one contextual-level moderator as most of the primary studies in customer mistreatment did not report information related to ethnicity, future empirical studies should explore how race can influence the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees given that both the service workforce and customers can be very diverse in some service contexts.

Finally, my meta-regression results show that given the three contextual-level moderators (i.e., service provider type, average age, and percentage of females)

included in the regression models, the Q statistics in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, combined emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal are still significant (see Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4). These significant values indicate that there is still substantial heterogeneity in the true effect sizes with meta-regression even after accounting for the three contextual-level moderators. In other words, despite the three contextual-level moderators in my model, additional moderators should be included in future research to account for the significant heterogeneity in the true effects. The current meta-analysis included multiple types of customer mistreatment measured with different scales, which might be the reason for wide credibility intervals and significant heterogeneity in the true effect sizes. In addition, future researchers may also want to consider the effects of macro-level moderators (i.e., national culture difference, GDP, etc.) and methodology-related moderators (longitudinal design versus cross-sectional design). Furthermore, service employees' cognitive outcomes triggered by customer mistreatment is a potential topic for future research. Based on the dual-processes system (Evans, 2008), future researchers can consider testing dual mediation model to examine the effect of customer mistreatment on service employee's behavioural outcomes via affective outcomes and cognitive outcomes.

2.6.2 Practical Implications

Findings from the current study support the notion that customer mistreatment can lead to negative outcomes for service employees, such as reduced job satisfaction (Harris & Leather, 2011) and organizational commitment (Yang & Lau, 2019). The effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' turnover intentions (Han et al., 2016) and work withdrawal (Sliter et al., 2012) can also substantially increase costs for service organizations. Thus, I offer several practical implications for both service

employees and service organizations. First, service organizations should seek to address and reduce the negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees. For example, organizations should send clear messages to both service employees and customers that customer mistreatment is a breach of social norms and mutual respect that are not tolerated in the organization. Effective organizational policies and procedures can help employees to guide their behavioral responses if mistreatment occurs, nevertheless. Organizations should take prophylactic measures such as establishing clear channels for service employees to report customer mistreatment when it occurs, ensuring appropriate actions are taken when service employees reported customer mistreatment (e.g., providing social support, taking a short break) and creating effective interventions and employee support programs that may mitigate the negative effects of customer mistreatment on service employees. Future research can seek to measure the effectiveness of different preventative measures aimed at reducing the harm of customer mistreatment on service employees' well-being. Moreover, service organizations should provide training to equip service employees with active self-protection and coping strategies such as initiating positive interactions with customers during service interactions and seeking help from colleagues and supervisors to cope with, minimize, and deter future customer mistreatment.

2.6.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Similar to other meta-analysis studies, this meta-analysis is not without limitations. The majority of the primary studies included in my meta-analysis are based on cross-sectional data (like most meta-analysis), prohibiting us to conclude definite causal directions. As a result, readers should be cautious in interpreting my meta-analysis results as implying causality. Future researchers should investigate and replicate the relationships of this meta-analysis using designs best suited for determining causation.

However, with an increase in studies based on longitudinal panel design, theoretical assumptions about the directionality of customer mistreatment and its outcomes on service employees may be more thoroughly subjected to meta-analytic testing. Second, most of the studies included in my meta-analysis used self-reported measures. Thus, common-method variance might have artificially inflated some of the correlations that I estimated. Third, my meta-analysis is limited by its focus on service employees' affective outcomes and behavioral outcomes. Given that customer mistreatment can also adversely influence employee performance, long-term health outcomes, and organizational performance, future work should aim to estimate additional financial costs associated with customer mistreatment, such as the cost incurred due to employee turnover. It is possible that some types of customer mistreatment are more damaging and thus have higher associated financial cost for service organizations. Future research can study whether short-term and long-term financial costs vary across different types of customer mistreatment. Fourth, although meta-regression is commonly used to examine moderators in meta-analysis, there are several measurement and statistical pitfalls in the use of meta-regression, such as low statistical power due to the insufficient number of studies. Thus, readers should interpret meta-regression results with such caveats in mind (Schmidt, 2017). Fifth, studies that use dynamic approaches with experience sampling methodology and multi-source data in customer mistreatment are still too few in number and too different to warrant meta-analysis synthesis. Also, primary studies that use cyclical processes with both customer and service employee's data to unravel the complexity of customer mistreatment is scant (Subramony et al., 2021). Future research may benefit from using such cyclical/spiral designs to explore whether previous customer mistreatment influences services employees outcomes in subsequent service episodes (Groth & Grandey, 2012).

Chapter 3: The Spill-over and Spiraling Effect of Customer

Mistreatment on Service Employee's Well-being

3.1 Abstract

Taking a dynamic perspective of resource loss, in this study, the spillover and spiraling mechanisms of resource loss between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions were examined. Specifically, I examined the spillover mechanism between employees' emotional exhaustion in the evening and their negative emotions the next morning. Moreover, I tested the spiraling mechanism from service employees' emotional exhaustion the previous evening to their emotional exhaustion the next evening. Data were collected from 76 service employees at 3 time points during each workday for 10 consecutive workdays. The results showed the impact of customer mistreatment on employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to the next day, which leads them to experience negative emotions in the morning. Furthermore, the impact of customer mistreatment on employees' evening emotional exhaustion triggers an emotional exhaustion spiral in which employees' evening emotional exhaustion leads to more emotional exhaustion the next evening. The implications and limitations of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: customer mistreatment, emotional exhaustion, negative emotions, resource loss spiral, spillover effect.

3.2 Introduction

Frontline service employees often encounter mistreatment from customers, such as complaints, conflict, and even aggression (Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Exposure to customer mistreatment over time can drain service employees' key resources, which leads to negative consequences for these employees, such as emotional exhaustion, negative emotions, burnout, and strain (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Goussinsky, 2011; Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Empirical studies that have adopted a resource-based conceptualization of customer mistreatment have well documented the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' resource-related outcomes (see Koopmann et al., 2015). Customer mistreatment, defined as low-quality interpersonal treatment that employees receive from their customers (Wang et al., 2011), is especially prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industry due to the high level of customer interaction (Jung & Yoon, 2018; Wang et al., 2020). During the global COVID-19 pandemic, service employees' experience of customer mistreatment further increased because panic buying and safety concerns have exacerbated customers' stress.

Although customer mistreatment has been known to deplete service employees' resources (e.g., Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Wang et al., 2011), most empirical studies have adopted a static perspective and have ignored the dynamic perspective of service interactions. These studies were conducted under the assumption that the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees is contained in the temporal or momentary boundary. However,

based on the nature of the resource loss spiral (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014), this assumption may not be valid. The effects of resource loss caused by customer mistreatment are not only momentary but also can spill over and spiral to have lasting effects on service employees (Dudenhoffer & Dormann, 2013; Groth & Grandey, 2012). Customer service has a strong dynamic nature. Service employees often need to engage with multiple service interactions for different customers per day. Service interactions do not exist in isolation, previous service interactions can influence future service interactions. The on-going effect of customer mistreatment on service employees can vary across service interactions, across hours, and across days. Besides, understanding how the impact of customer mistreatment unfolds over time can be helpful for service employees and service organizations to develop strategies or interventions to reduce the negative effects of customer mistreatment. Thus, dynamic perspectives, such as spill-over effect and spiralling effect, are needed to study the impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes. Building on COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002; Hobfoll et al., 2018), I argue that service employees need to invest a great number of resources in dealing with the interpersonal and emotional demands induced by customer mistreatment. Service employees may not have opportunities to gain resources during service interactions. When service employees encounter customer mistreatment, they need to engage in emotional and behavioral regulations to align their service behaviors with organizational service rules, which ask service employees to provide service with positive emotions, professionalism, and respect (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007; Sliter et al., 2010).

In other words, in addition to the primary resource loss caused by customer mistreatment, service employees need to invest more resources, such as additional attentional and emotional resources, to conform to and fulfill their prescribed service responsibilities. In turn, further resource investment may lead to secondary resource loss that can trigger service employees' resource loss spiral (Grandey et al., 2012). Despite the considerable research attention that customer mistreatment scholars have devoted to examining the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' resource loss, existing research has primarily adopted the static resource loss perspective (see Koopmann et al., 2015), and investigating the dynamic resource loss mechanism (i.e., spillover and spiraling mechanisms) has been largely ignored.

However, how and whether the impact of resource loss is related to service employees' daily experience of customer mistreatment spill over and spiral that have lasting effects on their well-being remain unknown. I contend that service employees' experience of customer mistreatment triggers employees' resource loss mechanisms, such as spillover and spiraling mechanisms of resource loss, which have negative consequences for service employees across time. Building on COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), I argue that the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees not only has a temporal or momentary effect on employees but also a spill over and spiral to have lasting effects on employees due to the dynamic nature of resource losses. However, surprisingly few studies have theorized or investigated the spillover and spiraling mechanisms underlying the dynamic relationship between customer mistreatment and its impact on service employees' well-being. This constraint reflects

the dynamic nature of service interactions, which captures the negative exchange relationship between service employees' daily experience of customer mistreatment and service employees' well-being (i.e., emotional exhaustion and negative emotions).

In light of this unexplored area of customer mistreatment research, the current study makes three primary contributions to the extant literature. First, using the experience-sampling method (ESM), I extend customer mistreatment research by shifting the focus from a static to a dynamic perspective. I investigated the underpinning dynamic resource loss mechanisms of the relationship between service employees' experience of customer mistreatment and employees' affective outcomes (e.g., emotional exhaustion and negative emotions). Second, my study takes a step further to examine the spillover mechanism of resource loss in customer mistreatment research. While many studies focus on different consequences of customer mistreatment on service employees (e.g., emotional exhaustion, Adams & Buck, 2010; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Sliter et al., 2010), whether those consequences spill over to subsequent working days is less well understood. Specifically, I tested whether the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to employees' morning negative emotions on the next work day. Third, by integrating the spiral nature of service interactions and the spiral nature of resource loss, I provide a dynamic perspective for customer mistreatment research. Along this line, my research also extends theory in the customer mistreatment literature regarding whether and how service employees' daily experience of customer mistreatment would trigger employees' resource loss spiral (e.g., emotional exhaustion spiral).

3.3. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

3.3.1 Customer Mistreatment and its Negative Impact

In the mind of customers, service employees are the “face of the organization” (Bitner, Booms, & Tetrault, 1990). Service employees on the service frontline are often exposed to low-quality interpersonal treatment from their customers (Wang et al., 2011). Research studies on customer mistreatment have steadily proliferated over the past few decades. On the one hand, researchers in organizational psychology and organizational behavior (OPOB) have adopted the employee-centered perspective. As a “difficult” or “stressful” work event that harms service employees, customer mistreatment can lead to different negative outcomes for service employees, such as anger, strain, and counterproductive behaviors (e.g., Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). On the other hand, empirical studies in marketing have typically focused on customers’ perception of employees’ service failures as a starting point of customer mistreatment, such as customer dissatisfaction, customer disappointment, and customer rage and complaint (e.g., Bitner et al., 1990; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). In addition, customer mistreatment can have important consequences not just for service employees and customers; for service organizations, the vicarious effects of customer mistreatment are related to loss of return business and negative word of mouth by other customers (Bowen, Gilliland, & Folger, 1999).

Researchers have studied a wide range of behavioral and nonbehavioral forms of customer mistreatment. For example, service employees may encounter customers who

treat them in disrespectful, unreasonable, demeaning, or aggressive ways, and customers may make illegitimate complaints or engage in verbal or physical aggression toward service employees (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Wang et al., 2011; Skarlicki et al., 2008). Additionally, researchers have identified closely related concepts such as dysfunctional customer behavior, deviant behavior, and some more intensive forms of customer mistreatment, such as customer rage, violence, and sexual harassment, etc. (Grandey et al., 2004; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2009). As discussed by Dormann and Zapf (2004), the range of mistreatment behaviors is often linked to disproportionate or ambiguous customer expectations. Recent narrative review articles have documented different outcomes of customer mistreatment on service employees, especially employees' affective outcomes such as stress, strain and emotional exhaustion (see Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021). As a theory of stress, current researchers have primarily applied COR theory to understand the effect of resource loss on individual stress and strain (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Hobfoll, 2001).

Researchers have argued that COR theory provides an integrated theory of stress and strain (Halbesleben et al., 2014), which helps explain employees' reactions to work stress, such as that resulting from customer mistreatment. Hobfoll (1989) argued that individuals are likely to lose key resources when dealing with stressful events. Lazarus (1999) defined a stressful event as a situation that causes real or perceived threats of losses of individuals' resources and one that the individual desires to rectify. According to COR theory, individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect things that they centrally value (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Employees can use various resources to conduct

their work. Hobfoll (1989) defined resources as things such as personal characteristics, conditions, energies, and objects that are valued by individuals as a means of gaining those personal characteristics, conditions, energies, and objects. Some specific resources of people include things like energy, time, skills and knowledge (energy resources), and pride in one's work and oneself, self-esteem (personal characteristics) (Hobfoll, 1988).

A central tenet of COR theory is that stressful events make people perceive the potential or actual loss of these valuable resources. In response to the threat of resource loss, people will make efforts to minimize or prevent potential resource loss and try to gain more resources to replenish the previous loss of resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Employees' resource loss or depletion is often related to various workplace stressors (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002). There is empirical evidence that shows that interpersonal mistreatment can negatively impact individuals' level of resources (e.g., reduced self-worth and self-esteem, Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Spratlen, 1995). Moreover, COR theory has a dynamic nature. When individuals face the loss of primary resources (e.g., personal possessions, self-esteem, social relationships, etc.), they reinvest available resources to offset the resource loss. If their primary resources are not replenished, further resource losses occur, which results in a resource loss spiral (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007; Hobfoll, 2002). The fluctuation of resources is an element of COR theory that has been examined but has not been directly addressed (Halbesleben et al., 2014). For example, many empirical studies have employed longitudinal designs that have accounted for changes in resources (e.g., Mäkikangas et al., 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Previous studies have suggested

resource fluctuations in as little as hours and as long as decades (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2011).

As a specific form of interpersonal mistreatment, customer mistreatment can have a similar negative effect on service employees' level of resources (e.g., reduced self-worth and self-esteem; Dormann & Zapf, 2004). Many researchers have adopted a resource-based perspective to investigate the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' resource loss, which can lead to different negative outcomes for service employees. For example, when service employees experience customer mistreatment, they engage in emotional and behavioral regulation to maintain their service performance in line with organizational service rules that impair their ability to serve customers with professionalism, respect, and positive emotions (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007; Sliter et al., 2010). Similarly, Wang et al. (2011) found that service employees' resource losses caused by customer mistreatment reduced their capability to conform to customer service rules and regulate their service behaviors. The results from a number of experimental studies showed that customer mistreatment reduced service employees' task performance through the depletion of cognitive resources, such as working memory and recognition memory (Rafaeli et al., 2012).

3.3.2 Customer Mistreatment and Employee Resource Loss

As a stressful work event, customer mistreatment can create a considerable amount of stress for service employees (Hu et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014). Service interactions

between service employees and customers provide numerous opportunities for resource gain or loss. Although customers' expressions of gratitude or acknowledgment of employees' good service can increase employees' resources (e.g., enhanced self-esteem and sense of self-worth), mistreatment from customers (e.g., yelling at employees, unreasonable criticism to employees, inappropriate comments to employees) can significantly lower service employees' resources (e.g., reduced self-esteem and sense of self-worth; Dormann & Zapf, 2004). People's experience with resource loss makes them invest resources to protect against further resource loss, recover from losses, and gain new resources (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Vinokur & Schul, 2002). However, investments in available resources may not always help people stop resource losses but may lead to further resource losses that can induce more stress and strain. A large number of empirical studies have found that when people lose resources at work, people are more likely to experience strain in the form of burnout (Shirom, 1989), depression (Kessler, Turner, & House, 1988), and other physiological outcomes (DeVente et al., 2003; Melamed et al., 2006).

Customer mistreatment is a stressful work event for service employees. When dealing with customer mistreatment, service employees are under demand to realign their available resources to compensate for the resource loss caused by such mistreatment. Under service organizations' customer-centered service rules (e.g., service with a smile, and customers are always right), even when service employees encounter customer mistreatment, they are required to control their displays of emotion (e.g., display positive emotions and suppress negative emotions) rather than display

autonomy. However, controlling displays depletes employees' resources, which can lead to negative affective outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion (Bozionelos & Kiamou, 2008; Grandey, 2003). In addition, given the power difference between service employees and customers, service employees usually cannot choose their customers or withdraw from customer mistreatment events. To maintain their service performance by following customer-centered service rules, service employees often need to invest additional resources to deal with customer mistreatment events that tend to exhaust them emotionally at the end of each working day (Grandey et al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2012). Moreover, service employees and customers have certain expectations about their own interpersonal behaviors during service interactions (Abelson, 1981; Lord & Kernan, 1987). Engaging in customer mistreatment is a clear deviation from these expectations that both employees and customers have implicitly agreed to when entering the service relationship (Bowen & Ford, 2002). Violations of these expectations can distract service employees from the task because the service interaction becomes less automatic, and they must expend more effort to regulate their negative affective responses caused by customer mistreatment, which depletes service employees' resources. For example, Rupp and Spencer (2006) used an experimental call center simulation to show that difficult customers (e.g., lacking courteous behavior, not providing necessary information) were perceived as interpersonally unfair, evoked anger in the service provider, and induced more effortful emotion regulation. Thus, customer mistreatment events require employees to expend more effort to manage their emotions and provide "service with a smile." Effortful self-regulation is likely to

deplete service employees' resources during service interactions (Richards & Gross, 1999; Schmeichel, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2003) because self-regulation is an effortful process that can be taxing on an individual's limited regulatory resources (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). In other words, customer mistreatment increases the need for service employees to self-regulate, depleting their resources (e.g., mental resources) and leading to emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 1: Employees' experience of customer mistreatment throughout the workday has a positive effect on their emotional exhaustion in the evening.

In addition, the effects of emotional exhaustion caused by customer mistreatment are not only momentary but also can spill over and have lasting effects on employees (Dudenhoffer & Dormann, 2013; Groth & Grandey, 2012). Previous studies have shown that interacting with a single uncivil customer can worsen service employees' emotional experiences (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Spencer & Rupp, 2009). COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002) suggests that when both psychological and physical personal resources are at risk of being lost, negative emotions such as anxiety and distress are often induced in individuals (Wang et al., 2011). For example, Thomsen (2006) argued that individuals' resource losses from expending effort can drain resources, such as through fatigue and negative affect. Three complementary field studies with frontline service employees have found that employees' emotional exhaustion is positively associated with their negative emotions (van Jaarsveld et al., 2021). Within the customer-dominated service relationship, service employees often lack opportunities to replenish their lost resources,

causing them to continue to lose key resources. As time goes on, the effect of employees' resource losses (i.e., emotional exhaustion) caused by customer mistreatment can spill over to service employees' negative emotions the next day. Therefore, as a result of resource losses, daily customer mistreatment can lead to employees' evening emotional exhaustion, and the effect of employees' evening emotional exhaustion is likely to spill over and cause negative emotions in the next morning after customer mistreatment events.

Hypothesis 2: Employees' emotional exhaustion in the evening has a positive effect on their negative emotions the next morning.

Furthermore, a previous empirical study showed that employees who are chronically exhausted at the end of each working day start the next working day with depleted resources (Troughakos et al., 2015). Researchers of COR theory have focused on how individuals allocate and conserve resources in the context of resource losses (see review: Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014). As a result of resource losses, emotional exhaustion affects individuals' resource investment strategies that are tied to their performance at work (Demerouti et al. 2014, Wright & Cropanzano 1998). Resource-based theories suggest that customer mistreatment results in resource depletion and exhaustion, making it more difficult for employees to perform at desired levels (Hobfoll, 2002; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). For example, Halbesleben and Bowler (2007) used COR theory to argue that emotional exhaustion reduces employees' in-role job performance. As a resource-depleting work event, customer mistreatment is

perceived as threatening service employees' resources and thus elicits their negative emotions (Lazarus, 1993). The negative emotions of service employees signal the need for attention and emotional regulation during service interactions with customers, imposing additional demands on the resources needed for these employees to accomplish their tasks and regulate their behaviors and emotions (Wang et al., 2011). Service employees' efforts to regulate their negative emotions are then followed by further resource loss, which impairs their ability to provide satisfactory service to customers. Moreover, previous research on service quality has argued that each customer has unique expectations of the desired service, adequate service, and predicted service (Brown & Swartz, 1989). For customers, if the actual service delivery falls outside a "zone of tolerance" (bounded by desired service and adequate service), service dissatisfaction is triggered. Service employees' failure to provide desired and adequate services, and especially the failure to regulate their negative emotions during service interactions, is often perceived as service failure by customers. Service failures are likely to elicit negative customer reactions. For example, Menon and Dube (2000) found that rude and unhelpful behaviors by service employees are the most frequent triggers of customer anger. Zeelenberg and Pieters (2004) found that customers' perception of service failures is usually linked to negative customer reactions, such as complaining, negative word of mouth, and service switching. Thus, if service employees are unsuccessful at regulating their negative emotions during service interactions, it can lead to customer mistreatment of service employees.

Therefore, I argue that when service employees encounter customer mistreatment during service interactions, they lose resources when dealing with such mistreatment, and they experience emotional exhaustion. The effect of service employees' emotional exhaustion can cause them to develop negative emotions on the next day. As service employees' negative emotions during service delivery are seen as service failures, customers who perceive employees' negative emotions are likely to engage in customer mistreatment to service employees.

Hypothesis 3: Employees' negative emotions in the morning has a positive effect on their experience of customer mistreatment throughout the workday.

3.3.3 Customer Mistreatment Triggers Service Employees' Resource Loss Spiral

COR theory posits that the magnitude of resource losses is not only greater than that of resource gains but also resource losses tend to affect people more rapidly and at increasing speed over time (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Stressful work events can "shock" employees' cognitive processing, forcing them to carefully evaluate the stressful work event that they have encountered. While that stressful work event alone may not create a negative spiral, employees' resource allocation response to that stressful event could. For example, Halbesleben et al. (2013) found that there was a general trend toward greater emotional exhaustion following a stressful event, which caused employees to experience a dramatic loss of resources. Hobfoll et al. (2018) argued that resource loss has a spiraling nature. Because stress occurs when resources are lost, at each iteration of the stress spiral, individuals and organizations have fewer resources to offset resource losses, creating resource loss spirals whereby losses gain in both impact and momentum. COR theory suggests that it is entirely possible that stressful events, such as

customer mistreatment, could induce a loss of resources that would turn a resource loss trajectory into a more dramatic resource loss spiral (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014). Consistent with Lindsley, Brass, and Thomas (1995), I define a resource loss spiral as a pattern of consecutive decreases in behavioral and affective negative reactions. Individuals' resources will be "lost" or "used up" if they are constantly being placed in stressful environments (Hobfoll, 1989). Over time, those individuals who do not have sufficient opportunities to replenish their previous resource loss or who do not have a strong resource base may have difficulty gaining new resources, which can lead to further resource loss. Thus, the initial resource loss may lead to secondary resource loss, which triggers a resource loss spiral that can create negative outcomes for people's well-being (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015). Previous empirical studies have documented the impact of resource loss spirals on people's work and life. For example, Demerouti, Bakker, and Bulters (2004) examined emotional exhaustion as a result of work interfering with family (and vice versa) and found support for a reciprocal negative spiral. Andersson and Pearson (1999) proposed a "spiraling effect of incivility" in the workplace of initially low-intensity mistreatment by coworkers, such as rudeness, thoughtless acts, or negative gestures, that quickly escalates into more intense, aggressive behaviors.

In general, rude, or angry behavior by supervisors, coworkers, team members, or other sources threatens one's resources (e.g., self-concept) and leads to stress and reduced well-being (Penney & Spector, 2005; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). The effect of customer mistreatment can be more detrimental than the mistreatment from organizational insiders (e.g., supervisors and coworkers). Because service employees are always considered "on stage" during service interactions with customers, they have

limited opportunities to remove themselves from customer mistreatment events. For example, Grandey et al. (2007) found that customer mistreatment has unique effects on employee burnout that exceed the effects of mistreatment from insiders (Grandey et al., 2007). One such effect is emotional exhaustion, a dimension of employee burnout that has been studied as an outcome of customer mistreatment during voice-to-voice (Grandey et al., 2004; van Jaarsveld, Walker, & Skarlicki, 2010) and face-to-face (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Sliter et al., 2010) service interactions.

Although substantial research has attempted to identify the causes and outcomes of customer mistreatment, little research has studied whether service employees' experience of customer mistreatment triggers a certain negative internal spiral that is detrimental to their job performance and well-being. For example, customer mistreatment causes service employees to lose key resources, which leads to emotional exhaustion and negative emotions (Grandey et al., 2007; van Jaarsveld et al., 2021). From the customers' perspective, they often see service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions as service failures, which can trigger more customer mistreatment of these employees. COR theory has repeatedly highlighted the importance of the spiraling nature of resource loss on employees' well-being and job performance (Hobfoll, 2001; De Cuyper et al., 2012; Demerouti et al., 2004; Heath et al., 2012). In the customer service context, service employees' resource losses (e.g., emotional exhaustion) caused by their daily experience of customer mistreatment can escalate into more resource losses from their negative affective outcomes and experience with customer mistreatment on the next day. It is therefore surprising that

little empirical research has sought to explain the spiraling dynamics between service employees' experience of customer mistreatment and their well-being outcomes.

I argue that the relationship between customer mistreatment and its consequences for service employees can be understood as a resource loss spiral. Specifically, service employees' resource losses (e.g., evening emotional exhaustion) related to their daily experience of customer mistreatment is the input for their negative emotions the next morning. Service employees' negative emotions during service delivery are perceived as service failures by customers, leading to more daily customer mistreatment of these employees. Subsequent customer mistreatment experiences cause further resource losses for service employees (e.g., emotional exhaustion) that can trigger their emotional exhaustion spiral. Once service employees' emotional exhaustion spiral starts, the spiral may be difficult to stop and can go from bad to worse across days. Therefore, I hypothesize the following.

Hypothesis 4: Employees' experience of customer mistreatment throughout the workday triggers their emotional exhaustion spiral; employees' emotional exhaustion in the evening has a positive effect on their emotional exhaustion the next evening via its effect on their negative emotions the next morning and their experience of customer mistreatment throughout the next workday.

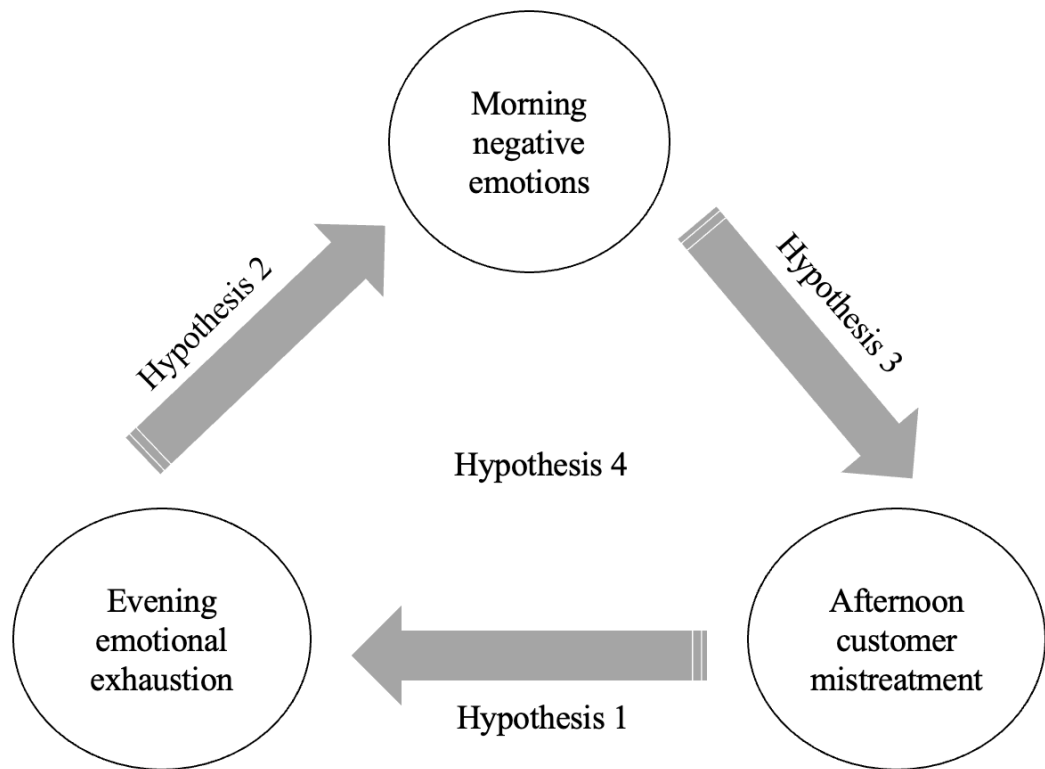


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model. Hypothesis 4 Represents the Spiraling Effect. All Hypothesized Relationships are Positive.

3.4 Method

3.4.1 Participants and Procedure

My sample consisted of 76 hairstylists at a hair salon in southeast China. All hairstylists (N = 83) at the hair salon were approached to participate in the study. Eighty of them agreed to participate (response rate = 96.38%). Data from four hairstylists were discarded because of large portions were missing. The final sample comprised 30 (or 39.5%) men and 46 (or 60.5%) women. The average age of the participants was 24.37 years (SD = 8.34), the average work experience in the service industry was 5.72 years (SD = 5.2), and the average years of education was 11.66 years (SD = 1.58). The hairstylists' major work responsibilities included providing beauty services to customers and responding to customer requests. Based on my discussions with the manager of the

hair salon and personal observations at the research site, employee–customer interactions lasted an average of between 30 and 45 minutes.

Data collection occurred in two phases. In the first phase, hairstylists completed a brief, one-time online survey that contained questions about their demographics (i.e., age, gender, education, service job tenure). One week later, in the second phase, I employed an experience-sampling design for this study where participants were asked to complete three daily surveys via their mobile phones (i.e., morning, afternoon and evening survey) for 10 consecutive working days. Questionnaires were distributed to participants at fixed time points. I sent the morning survey at 9:00 a.m., which included a measure of negative emotions. I sent the afternoon survey at 3:00 p.m., which included measures of perceived customer mistreatment. I sent the evening survey at 9:00 p.m., which included a measure of emotional exhaustion. All participants received 100 Chinese yuan (equivalent to approximately 15 USD) for participating regardless of the number of surveys they completed.

My lagged study design permitted a maximum of nine observations for each employee, and the morning measure of the first day and the evening measure of the last day were excluded from my analyses. The final data consisted of 644 paired observations from 76 employees, with each employee providing an average of 8.47 observations.

3.4.2 Measures

I followed the translation-back-translation method proposed by Brislin (1970) to translate my surveys into Chinese. All items are presented in the Appendix.

Afternoon customer mistreatment. I measured customer mistreatment by using an eight-item scale from Wang et al.'s (2011) measure of customer mistreatment. Employees were asked to recall “how frequently did your customer treat you in the

following ways during today's work?" using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = very frequently. Sample items were "said inappropriate things," "complained without reason" and "refused to listen to you." The average alpha coefficient across the 10 days was .96.

Morning negative emotions. Negative emotions were measured using a 5-item scale from the job-related affective well-being scale (JAWS) (Van Katwyk et al., 2000) to measure employees' morning negative emotions. Employees were asked to rate "how much do you currently feel the following emotions?" using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = extremely. Sample items were "angry" and "frustrated." The average alpha coefficient across the 10 days was .94.

Evening emotional exhaustion. Employees' emotional exhaustion was measured with a three-item scale from Wharton (1993). Employees were asked to respond to "How would you rate your current feeling based on the following items?" using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree. Sample items were "I feel emotionally drained by my work" and "I feel used up at the end of the workday." The average alpha coefficient across the 10 days was .81.

3.4.3 Analyses

Because of the nested structure of my data (daily observations nested within individuals), I specified a multilevel path model using Mplus (version 8.8; Muthén & Muthén, 2021) to test all hypotheses. Following recommendations by Hofmann, Griffin, and Gavin (2000), I group mean centered my continuous level 1 exogenous variables. All within-person slopes were specified as the fixed effects. Indirect effects were tested using procedures appropriate for multilevel analysis (Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006) and in accordance with recommendations by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010).

3.5 Results

Means, SDs, and intercorrelations among the study variables are reported in Table 1. To verify the distinctiveness of my study variables, I conducted multilevel confirmatory factor analysis to examine their underlying factor structure. The results indicated that a three-factor model (i.e., morning employee negative emotions, afternoon customer mistreatment, evening employee emotional exhaustion) displayed an acceptable fit (Chi-square = 477(202), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .04, comparative fit index (CFI) = .92, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) within = .03, SRMR between = .03), supporting the distinctiveness of my study variables. I compared the fit of this model to alternative models. The multilevel CFA for a two-factor model (Chi-square = 1621(206), RMSEA = .09, CFI = .61, SRMR within = .16, SRMR between = .09) and one-factor model (Chi-square = 1840(208), RMSEA = .10, CFI = .55, SRMR within = .17, SRMR between = .09) exhibited inferior fit with the data. The results indicated that my proposed three-factor model fit the data better than these alternative models.

Table 1: Means, SDs, and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Day T-1 emotional exhaustion	2.20	.81	(.81)	.59**	.50**	.65**
2. Day T morning negative emotions	1.62	.65	.11**	(.94)	.63**	.52**
3. Day T afternoon customer mistreatment	1.60	.59	.08	.18*	(.96)	.52**
4. Day T evening emotional exhaustion	2.21	.81	-.03	.01	.14**	(.81)

Note. N at Level 1 = 644, N at Level 2 = 76. Their means and SDs are based on between-person scores. Intercorrelations below the diagonal are based on one within-individual score; intercorrelations above the diagonal are based on between-individual scores. Coefficient alphas are presented on the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The results of my multilevel path analysis are shown in Figure 2 and Table 2. In support of hypothesis 1, I found that the perception of customer mistreatment throughout the workday was positively associated with employees' evening emotional exhaustion ($b = .24, p < .01$). Hypothesis 2 predicted that employees' evening emotional

exhaustion leads to employee negative emotions the next morning. As shown in table 2, this effect was positive and significant ($b = .12, p < .01$), providing support for hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 predicted that employee morning negative emotions lead to their perception of customer mistreatment throughout the workday. I found support for this hypothesis, as this effect was positive and significant ($b = .13, p < .01$).



Figure 2. Unstandardized estimates of the path coefficients. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that employees' perception of customer mistreatment throughout the day triggers emotional exhaustion spirals. Specifically, employees' evening emotional exhaustion leads to more emotional exhaustion the next evening via its effect on their negative emotions the next morning and their perception of customer mistreatment throughout the next day. As shown in Table 3, this indirect effect from evening exhaustion (Day T-1) on evening emotional exhaustion (Day T) through morning negative emotions (Day T) and afternoon customer mistreatment (Day T) was positive and significant ($b = .004, p < .01$). This result suggested that customer mistreatment triggers employees' emotional exhaustion spiral. Specifically, previous days' emotional exhaustion resulting from customer mistreatment led to more morning negative emotions and more customer mistreatment throughout the workday, which led to more emotional exhaustion on later days.

Table 2: Simultaneous Path Model Tests and Results

Variables	Morning negative emotions (Day T)		Afternoon customer mistreatment (Day T)		Evening emotional exhaustion (Day T)	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Level-1 (Within-person level)						
Intercept	1.61**	0.06	1.57**	0.05	2.18**	0.07
Emotional exhaustion (Day T-1)	0.12**	0.04	0.06	0.04	-0.04	0.03
Morning negative emotions (Day T)			0.13**	0.05	0.02	0.06
Afternoon customer mistreatment (Day T)					0.24**	0.06
Residual variance at level 1	0.13**	0.02	0.08**	0.01	0.22**	0.02
Level-2 (Between-person level)						
Residual variance at level 2	0.29**	0.06	0.24**	0.03	0.42**	0.05

Note: $N = 644$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 3: Summary of Hypothesized Indirect Effects

Hypothesized indirect effect	Point estimate	SE
Evening emotional exhaustion (Day T-1) → Morning negative emotions (Day T) → Afternoon customer mistreatment (Day T) → Evening emotional exhaustion (Day T)	0.004*	0.00

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

3.6 Discussion

Drawing on the dynamic perspective of resource loss, the findings of this study break new ground by investigating the spillover and spiraling mechanisms of a resource loss between service employees' experience of customer mistreatment and their emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. I examined the relationship between employees' experience of customer mistreatment during the day and their evening emotional exhaustion. The results showed that employees' experience of customer mistreatment during the day leads to evening emotional exhaustion. In addition, I examined the link between employees' morning negative emotions and their experience

of customer mistreatment during the day. My results showed that employees' negative emotions in the morning positively predicts their daily experience of customer mistreatment during the day. Moreover, I examined the spillover effect of employees' emotional exhaustion in the evening on their negative emotions the next morning. My results showed that the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to the next day, which leads to negative emotions in the morning. Furthermore, I tested the indirect effect of employees' emotional exhaustion the previous evening on their emotional exhaustion the next evening. This effect was indirect and mediated by employees' morning negative emotions and their experience of customer mistreatment during the day. My results showed that customer mistreatment triggered employees' emotional exhaustion spiral. Once the resource loss caused by customer mistreatment leads to employees' emotional exhaustion in the evening, this resource loss develops into a resource loss spiral that leads to employees' emotional exhaustion the next evening.

3.6.1 Theoretical Implications

My findings contribute to the customer service literature in multiple ways. First, my study contributes to customer mistreatment research and negative service interactions more broadly by highlighting the dynamic nature of service interactions and the dynamic resource loss mechanisms behind it. Although many studies on customer service research well documented the relationship between customer mistreatment and its consequences (see Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021), they adopted a static perspective of service interactions, but the dynamic nature of service interactions was largely ignored. Those studies utilized cross-sectional designs that have limited their ability to capture the dynamic nature of service interactions and the dynamic resource loss mechanisms underlying the relationship between customer mistreatment and

employees' well-being. Simultaneously measuring customer mistreatment and its consequences can spuriously strengthen the relationships between the variables. Given the dynamic nature of both service interactions and resource loss, cross-sectional designs do not reflect the reality of what is happening to employees' resources when they experience mistreatment from customers. To capture the dynamic resource loss mechanisms over time, I employed the ESM to examine the mechanisms between customer mistreatment and employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. Previous research has generally emphasized employees' resource losses after customer mistreatment and its negative consequences related to such loss, such as emotional exhaustion (e.g., Goldberg & Grandey, 2007) and negative emotions (Weber, Bradley, & Sparks, 2017). However, surprisingly few studies have theorized or investigated the dynamic mechanisms of resource loss underlying the dynamic relationship between customer mistreatment and its impact on service employees' well-being. Indeed, customer mistreatment can deplete service employees' key resources. When mistreated, the negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees is not contained in temporal or momentary boundaries. As a stressful work event for service employees, the negative impact of customer mistreatment on the previous day can continue to develop and influence service employees' well-being the next day. My research therefore highlights the dynamic perspective of service interactions and the detrimental effect of dynamic mechanisms of resource loss over time.

Second, I examined the spillover mechanism of resource loss related to customer mistreatment. My examination of the potential spillover effect sheds light on the development and escalation of resource losses stemming from customer mistreatment. Building on the dynamic nature of the resource loss perspective (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014), the effect of customer mistreatment on the previous day can spill over to affect service employees' well-being the next day. However, the spillover

effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' well-being outcomes on the next day has been underinvestigated, and the underlying resource loss mechanism has been seldom explored. Using data collected from 76 service employees at 3 time points per day for 10 consecutive workdays, I empirically examined whether the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to employees' morning negative emotions on the next work day. My findings showed how the effect of the previous day's customer mistreatment experience can instigate further negative consequences on service employees' well-being on the next day.

Third, I contribute to both the customer service literature and research on COR theory by empirically testing a spiraling mechanism of resource loss between customer mistreatment and employees' emotional exhaustion across time. The negative impact of customer mistreatment on employees is not temporary or momentary. Once customer mistreatment triggers service employees' emotional exhaustion spiral, the spiral may be difficult to stop and can go from bad to worse across days. Although empirical evidence continues to mount regarding the use of longitudinal research design (e.g., ESM) to study the impact of customer mistreatment and the resource losses behind it (Yue et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2017), no study has empirically examined the spiraling mechanism of resource loss between customer mistreatment and employee well-being outcomes. My findings showed that customer mistreatment can deplete the resources of service employees and quickly worsen the situation. Over time, service employees may become trapped in the spiraling mechanism of resource loss between customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion, with possible long-term consequences, such as poorer employee well-being (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Kern & Grandey, 2009) and a negative effect on organizations (loss of return business, negative word of mouth by other customers; Bowen, Gilliland, & Folger, 1999). Stressful customer mistreatment events can be viewed as a spiraling mechanism of resource losses. This mechanism provides a useful

framework for future research when theorizing how the spiraling mechanism of resource loss endangers service employees' well-being outcomes after customer mistreatment.

3.6.2 Practical Implications

As a pervasive feature in the customer service context, customer mistreatment can cause service employees to lose key resources. A lack of opportunities for employees to replenish lost resources causes them to lose secondary resources, which can trigger a resource loss spiral. Thus, I offer several practical implications for both service employees and service organizations. Service organizations and managers should design effective programs and practices to help service employees better deal with customer mistreatment. First, service organizations and managers can provide social support to help service employees stop resource losses and gain new resources. Researchers have argued that social support is among the resources that is most often assumed to play a helpful role in addressing work demands (Cohen & Wills, 1985, Halbesleben, 2006, Kurtessis et al. 2017). Service employees' perception of social support from their supervisors buffers performance and motivation decrements from stressful customer encounters (Singh, 2000). When mistreated, social support from frontline managers can help employees stop resource losses and provide opportunities for employees to recover from customer mistreatment events.

Second, employee empowerment programs can play a critical role in increasing employees' resources to deal with customer mistreatment. Previous studies have found that when employees were low in empowerment or autonomy, they reported more customer aggression and emotional exhaustion (Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005; Grandey et al., 2004). Organizational policies that focus on employee empowerment and autonomy can

be seen as additional resources that enhance service employees' ability to better deal with customer mistreatment.

Third, organizations can cultivate a supportive climate for service employees. Grandey et al. (2012) argued that a climate of authenticity promotes authentic expressions of feelings among team members, which buffers service employees from the strain of managing emotions in response to mistreatment by patients. A supportive organizational climate can be seen as an additional resource that helps employees better deal with the negative impact of customer mistreatment.

Fourth, service organizations should provide training to help service employees preserve resources and gain new resources after customer mistreatment. As positive interactions with customers may help employees gain new resources, service organizations can train employees to initiate positive interactions with customers during service interactions. To effectively cope with, minimize, and deter the negative impact of resource losses related to customer mistreatment, service organizations should train employees to seek help from colleagues and supervisors after customer mistreatment.

Fifth, the most effective way to mitigate the negative impact of customer mistreatment on service employees is to reduce the occurrence of such mistreatment during service interactions. Organizations should set expectations for appropriate service interactions with both service employees and customers. For example, it is necessary for organizations to send clear messages that customer mistreatment is a breach of social norms and mutual respect and is not tolerated during service interactions.

Sixth, service organizations and managers can encourage their employees to engage in on-work micro breaks that can help them stop resource loss, such as stretching, chatting with colleagues, and checking personal social media (Kim et al., 2018). Instead of engaging in on-work micro breaks, service employees can engage in off-work

activities to replenish their lost resources and renew their resources, such as taking lunch breaks (Trougakos et al., 2014), sleeping (Barnes & Wagner, 2009), and managing their food intake (Gailliot et al., 2007).

Seventh, service organizations need to select employees who possess suitable resources for customer service work. Employee emotional intelligence has been shown to improve the performance of those in jobs with high emotional demands (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Service employees with high emotional intelligence have more resources for regulating their emotions and behaviors during unpleasant interactions with customers. Service employees' perspective-taking ability should have the potential to slow down or stop the resource loss spiral triggered by customer mistreatment. Similarly, service employees high in customer orientation usually have more resources to fulfil customers' service-related needs (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Brown et al., 2002). In contrast, service employees high in negative affectivity can experience accelerated resource losses (Wang et al., 2011) because they tend to perceive service interactions as negative and have more negative service interactions with customers (Grandey et al., 2004; Spector, Fox, & Van Katwyk, 1999).

Future research can seek to measure the effectiveness of different preventative programs and practices that may mitigate the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' resource losses. Given the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment on service employees, researchers should focus on developing resource-focused interventions that can help service employees break or slow down the resource loss spiral process. As it may be difficult for service employees to avoid customer mistreatment during service interactions, future research should focus on introducing practices that increase their ability to adapt the customer-centered service relationship and gain new resources (Kim et al., 2015; van den Heuvel et al., 2013).

3.6.3 Limitations and Future Directions

Although the current study has several strengths, it also has several limitations that should be addressed by future research. First, instead of measuring the loss of specific resources, my study measured emotional exhaustion, which is one of the most commonly measured outcomes of resource losses. The disadvantage to measuring proximal outcomes is that changes in resources are assumed, and it is not clear which resources are responsible for the change. When researchers take steps toward building resource-based interventions to help employees break the resource loss spiral between customer mistreatment and employee outcomes, not measuring the specific type of resources affected in the study becomes problematic, as it takes away a target for building the resource-based intervention. However, measuring proximal outcomes of resource loss is typically justified by the argument that the selection of any specific resource does not reflect the idiosyncratic nature of resources and their value, particularly across occupations. In future research, the initiative should be taken to measure the changes in specific types of resources (Hobfoll, 1988), such as personal characteristics resources (e.g., self-esteem, pride in one's work and oneself) and energy resources (e.g., energy, time, skills and knowledge), underlying the relationship between customer mistreatment and employee well-being.

Second, by using single-source data from service employees, my study did not capture the dyadic and reciprocal nature of service interactions between customers and employees. It is possible that service employees' responses to customer mistreatment were biased toward their own feelings and experiences, thus not accurately capturing customers' behaviors. However, given that the items measuring customer mistreatment of employees were based on specific behaviors, employees' responses to those items were expected to be less biased. Future researchers should collect multiple sources of data—ideally directly from employees and customers—to improve our understanding of

the interpersonal dynamics of and the dyadic and reciprocal service relationships between employees and customers (Groth & Grandey, 2012).

Third, as gender differences can influence service employee's resource levels and patterns of resource loss during service interactions, future research should look at whether the gender difference creates any different pattern in the resource loss spiraling due to customer mistreatment.

3.7 Conclusion

This study is the first to investigate the spiraling mechanism of resource loss between service employees' experience of customer mistreatment and their emotional exhaustion. My findings show that the resource loss spiral mechanism underlying the relationship quickly goes from bad to worse across days, which escalates the negative impact of customer mistreatment on employees' emotional exhaustion.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Summary

Customer mistreatment can lead to various detrimental impacts on the parties involved in service interactions. It is of both theoretical and empirical importance to explore the effects of customer mistreatment. Using diverse theoretical perspectives, conceptualization and methodologies in customer mistreatment research, the current literature on customer mistreatment has included multiple streams of research. For example, psychology and organizational behavior researchers have focused on the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' affect (e.g., anger, strain) and behavior (e.g., counterproductive behavior) (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). Management researchers have examined the impact of customer mistreatment on service employees' job performance and other organizational outcomes (Groth et al., 2019). Within the field of marketing, researchers have typically studied how service employees' service delivery failures are related to customers' dissatisfaction and disappointment, which leads to customer mistreatment of service employees (Bitner et al., 1990; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). In addition, since the seminal article on negative exchange spirals in service employee–customer service interactions (Groth & Grandey, 2012), researchers have devoted significant attention to exploring how the dynamic nature of service interactions influences service employees, customers and organizations. Thus, given the prevalence and negative consequences of customer mistreatment, it is important to provide an integrative review of customer mistreatment outcomes and study the dynamic mechanisms (e.g., spillover and spiraling mechanisms) underlying the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employee outcomes.

4.1.1 Summary of Each Chapter's Results

Customer mistreatment is a stressful and pervasive work event that can have detrimental impacts on service employees, service organizations and even customers themselves. Either incidental or chronic experiences of customer mistreatment can cause service employees to lose key resources, which is correlated with a wide range of negative affective and behavioral outcomes for these employees (see Koopmann et al., 2015; Yagil, 2021). However, a meta-analysis of the current empirical findings of customer mistreatment has been lacking, and very few studies have empirically examined the dynamic nature of service interactions between customers and service employees in customer mistreatment research.

Chapter 2 provides meta-analytic evidence of the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. The results of Chapter 2 showed that customer mistreatment is significantly correlated with service employees' affective outcomes (e.g., reduced job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased stress) and behavioral outcomes (e.g., increased use of combined emotional labor, increased use of surface acting, increased turnover intentions, and increased work withdrawal). These findings are consistent with the arguments of AET (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996) and COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Service employees may perceive customer mistreatment as a negative affective event that leads to negative affective and behavioral consequences (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, and emotional labor; Bamfo et al., 2018; Hu et al., 2017; Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Spencer & Rupp, 2009; Yang & Lau, 2019). As a stressful work event for service employees, customer mistreatment depletes service employees' resources. To prevent further resource losses and to gain new resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018), service employees may engage in withdrawal behaviors

to deal with customer mistreatment (e.g., turnover intention and work withdrawal; Han et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2012; Yue et al., 2021). Furthermore, given that existing empirical studies on customer mistreatment were conducted within a diverse range of service contexts (e.g., different types of service providers, average age, and percentage of females), an important but unaddressed question in customer mistreatment research is whether the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes is influenced by contextual-level factors across numerous primary studies. Chapter 2 provides empirical evidence to answer this question. First, for the difference between professional service employees and service shop employees, meta-regression results showed that the effect of customer mistreatment on professional service employees' organizational commitment is weaker than that on service shop employees. However, the same effect on professional service employees was not detected for job satisfaction, stress, combined emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, turnover intention and work withdrawal. Second, the results of meta-regression analysis did not find significant moderating effects of the average age and percentage of females on the relationships between customer mistreatment and affective and behavioral outcomes. In other words, the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes did not vary depending on the context with samples consisting of older employees and a higher proportion of females.

Given that most research studies on customer mistreatment have ignored the dynamic nature of service interactions, Chapter 3 extends customer mistreatment research by investigating dynamic resource loss mechanisms triggered by customer mistreatment. Specifically, Chapter 3 examined the spillover and spiraling mechanisms of resource loss underlying the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective outcomes. The results of Chapter 3 showed that service employees' experience of customer mistreatment during the day leads to employees' emotional

exhaustion in the evening. In addition, service employees' negative emotions in the morning lead to more customer mistreatment during the day. Moreover, the spillover effect triggered by customer mistreatment is detected. The results in Chapter 3 showed that the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' evening emotional exhaustion spills over to the next day, which leads to employees' morning negative emotions. Furthermore, I detected service employees' emotional exhaustion spiral. The indirect effect between service employees' emotional exhaustion on both the previous and the next day shows that customer mistreatment triggers service employees' emotional exhaustion spiral. In other words, the negative effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' emotional exhaustion can quickly escalate into more emotional exhaustion and develop into employees' emotional exhaustion spiral.

4.1.2 Integration of Results from Different Chapters

This thesis contributes to the customer mistreatment literature in two major ways. First, in Chapter 2, I have meta-analytically reviewed and synthesized previous empirical evidence on the relationship between customer mistreatment and its effect on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Second, in Chapter 3, I have taken a dynamic perspective of service interactions to empirically examine the spillover and spiraling mechanisms of resource loss underlying the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. Although management researchers have long studied the painful experience of customer mistreatment and its outcomes on service employees, the current findings lack a synthesis of the robustness of the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes. First, Chapter 2 provides meta-analytic evidence of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. As stressful work events for service employees, customer mistreatment not

only correlates with service employees' negative affective and behavioral outcomes but also likely depletes employees' resources to deal with it (Weiss & Crapanzano, 1996; Hobfoll et al., 2018). My meta-analysis results are consistent with the resource loss perspective (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Specifically, the results in Chapter 2 showed that customer mistreatment is detrimental to service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes.

Second, although most studies have conceptualized customer mistreatment as a resource-depletion event for service employees (Koopmann et al., 2015), current customer mistreatment research has failed to examine the dynamic perspective of resource loss because this literature has been predominantly occupied by the static perspective of service interactions, largely ignoring the dynamic perspective of service interactions. The results in Chapter 3 demonstrate that the resource losses caused by customer mistreatment is not only momentary but also can spill over and spiral to have lasting effects on service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions.

4.2 Research Implications

4.2.1 Negative Impact of Customer Mistreatment on Service Employees' Affective and Behavioral Outcomes

As the first meta-analysis to provide integrative meta-analytic evidence of customer mistreatment, a major contribution of this thesis is that I meta-analytically reviewed and synthesized 70 studies with 80 independent samples and 93 effect sizes ($N = 24,708$), which provides robust meta-analytic estimates of the effects of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and stress) and behavioral outcomes (e.g., combined emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal). In addition, since service employees may experience different types of customer mistreatment,

researchers have labeled customer mistreatment differently, such as customer deviant behavior, customer dysfunctional behavior, customer rage, customer violence, and customer sexual harassment (Grandey et al., 2004; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2009). In my meta-analysis, I systematically synthesized the current customer mistreatment literature by using different terminology of customer mistreatment across different research fields with different types of service employees.

Moreover, I compared the quantified magnitude of the effect sizes of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes with standard social science benchmarks (Cohen, 1988). The comparison indicates that reducing customer mistreatment has a substantial impact on reducing service employees' stress and turnover intention but only a moderately small impact on reducing service employees' work withdrawal.

Additionally, I have compared the quantified magnitude of the effect sizes of customer mistreatment with other organizational factors for four common employee outcomes in the workplace, namely, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and work withdrawal. A comparison of customer mistreatment with other well-established job-related factors shows that the effect sizes of role ambiguity, role conflict, responsibility, and role overload are similar to that of customer mistreatment on employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Cooper-Hakim & Viswevaran, 2005; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Different from these well-established job-related factors, the effect of some personality-related factors, such as negative affectivity, positive affectivity, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness on employees, is smaller than the effect of customer mistreatment on employees' turnover intention and work withdrawal (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Thoresen et al., 2003; Zimmerman, 2008). Thus, the meta-analytic results of customer mistreatment suggest that the impact of reducing customer mistreatment on employees' affective outcome (e.g., job satisfaction and organizational

commitment) is similar to the impact of reducing these job-related factors. However, the impact of reducing customer mistreatment on employees' behavioral outcomes (e.g., turnover intention and work withdrawal) is larger than the impact of reducing these personality-related factors on these outcomes.

Furthermore, my meta-analysis provides empirical evidence to answer an important but unaddressed question of whether the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes differs depending on contextual-level variables across primary studies. The findings of my meta-analysis study provide an overarching understanding of the role of the service context in service employees' experience of customer mistreatment that advances the theoretical insights into the degree to which service context matters for the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes.

In addition, researchers employed both affective event theory (AET) and conservation of resource (COR) theory to unravel the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes. AET argues that negative work events in the workplace like customer mistreatment can trigger service employees negative affective outcomes (e.g., job dissatisfaction) as well as negative behavioural outcomes (turnover intention). COR theory argues that when service employees encountered stressors like customer mistreatment in the workplace, service employees will strive to protect their resources and try to gain new resources to deal with negative outcomes related to customer mistreatment. The current thesis has discussed many empirical studies that employed either AET or COR theory to understand the effect of customer mistreatment on service employee's affective and behavioural outcomes. However, researchers have not started to integrate both AET and COR theory to study how AET would integrate with COR theory to explain the effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' outcomes. The integration of AET and COR theory can provide an integrated

framework for researchers and practitioners to have a more complete understanding about what are the significant negative effects of customer mistreatment on service employees, and how can service organizations and service employees leverage various resources to minimize the negative effect of customer mistreatment on both employees and organizations.

4.2.2 Customer Mistreatment and Service Employees' Resource Loss Mechanisms

The results of this thesis also contribute to the customer mistreatment literature by highlighting the dynamic nature of service interactions and the resource loss mechanisms behind the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. As most studies on customer mistreatment have adopted a static perspective and have utilized cross-sectional designs, current research on customer mistreatment has not reflected the reality of service employees' resource loss mechanisms when they experience customer mistreatment during service interactions. To remedy this important line of research, I employed the ESM to theorize and investigate the dynamic mechanisms of resource loss behind the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. Consistent with the resource loss perspective (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014), the dynamic perspective of service interactions and the detrimental effect of the dynamic mechanisms of resource loss on service employees are highlighted.

Moreover, my thesis investigated how customer mistreatment triggers the spillover mechanism of resource loss between service employees' evening emotional exhaustion and negative emotions the next morning. Building on the dynamic nature of the resource loss perspective (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014), the findings of

this thesis showed that the effect of the previous day's customer mistreatment experience not only leads to emotional exhaustion the previous evening but also instigates further negative consequences on service employees' negative emotions on the next day. This finding sheds light on the development and escalation of resource losses stemming from customer mistreatment.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the customer mistreatment literature by empirically testing a spiraling mechanism of resource loss behind the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional exhaustion across days. The result of this thesis suggests that customer mistreatment can deplete service employees' resources and quickly make things go from bad to worse. In other words, once customer mistreatment triggers service employees' emotional exhaustion spiral, the spiral may be difficult to stop. Over time, service employees may become trapped in the spiraling mechanism of resource loss between customer mistreatment and emotional exhaustion, with possible long-term consequences such as poorer well-being (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Kern & Grandey, 2009). The resource loss spiral mechanism behind the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employee outcomes not only challenges the static perspective but also provides a useful framework for studying the dynamic nature of service interactions in customer service research.

4.3 Practical Contributions

In this thesis, I also provide a number of practical contributions for managerial practices for service managers and service organizations. In this section, I focus on discussing some general practical contributions of the whole thesis, as the specific practical contributions of each chapter have been discussed in each chapter.

Given that customer mistreatment can lead to negative outcomes for service employees, such as reduced job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, increased turnover intentions, increased work withdrawal and increased emotional exhaustion, service organizations should seek to address and reduce these negative impacts. To do this, organizations should implement effective organizational policies and procedures to help service employees guide their behavioral responses to deal with customer mistreatment during service interactions. As customer mistreatment depletes the resources of service employees, service organizations and managers should provide some support to help service employees stop resource losses. Frontline managers can let mistreated service employees take some on-work micro breaks, such as stretching, chatting with colleagues, and checking personal social media, to help them stop resource loss (Kim et al., 2018).

Moreover, service organizations can design effective programs or interventions to empower frontline service employees and give them more autonomy in their customer service work, which may mitigate the negative effects of customer mistreatment on service employees. Specifically, service organizations can provide training programs to teach service employees how to preserve resources and gain new resources after customer mistreatment. In addition, service organizations should equip their employees with active self-protection and coping strategies, such as initiating positive interactions with customers during service interactions and seeking help from colleagues and supervisors to cope with, minimize and deter future customer mistreatment.

Furthermore, to prevent service employees from losing resources in customer service work, service organizations should look for ways to reduce the occurrence of customer mistreatment during service delivery. Service organizations can set expectations for appropriate service interactions with service employees and their customers. Service organizations can let their employees and customers know that

customer mistreatment is not tolerated during service interactions because it violates social norms and mutual respect. Additionally, service organizations should hire employees with suitable resources for customer service work. For example, service employees with high emotional intelligence and high customer orientation may have more resources for interpersonal customer service work. They are more likely to provide customers with the desired service and more capable of dealing with unpleasant interactions with customers (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Brown et al., 2002). Thus, service organizations can select service employees with high emotional intelligence and customer orientation to reduce the occurrence of customer mistreatment during service delivery.

4.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Similar to other theses, this thesis is not without limitations. In this section, I discuss some limitations of my thesis and provide future directions for customer mistreatment research. As the specific chapter limitations have been discussed in each chapter, I discuss some general limitations for the whole thesis.

Similar to most meta-analyses, the majority of the studies in my meta-analysis are conducted with cross-sectional designs and self-reported data. Researchers should be cautious about inflated common-method variance and should not conclude definite causal directions from meta-analytic results. To investigate the directionality of customer mistreatment and service employees' outcomes, future researchers should conduct more studies based on longitudinal panel design and multisource data.

In addition, due to the insufficient number of studies, meta-regression results have several measurement and statistical pitfalls (e.g., low statistical power). Readers should keep caveats in mind when interpreting meta-regression results (Schmidt, 2017).

My meta-analysis is limited by its focus on the relationships between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Future researchers can conduct meta-analyses that include antecedents of customer mistreatment, a more diverse range of moderators, and more customer mistreatment outcomes, such as customers' and organizations' outcomes.

Moreover, current studies on customer service that use cyclical processes with customer and service employee data are scant (Subramony et al., 2021). To improve our understanding of the dyadic and reciprocal service relationships between service employees and customers, future researchers can conduct more studies using cyclical/spiral designs and ideally collecting customer and service employee data to explore whether previous customer service events influence service employees' outcomes in subsequent customer service events (Groth & Grandey, 2012).

In addition, spiraling effects triggered by customer mistreatment deserve more attention in future research. Most previous studies have examined customer mistreatment and its impact by asking retroactive or general questions about the customer service experience rather than focusing on specific interactions. To provide a better basis for understanding the dynamic nature of service interactions, future researchers should study customer mistreatment from an interaction-to-interaction perspective. For example, future researchers can use the event-centered design to study how previous service interactions influence the next service interaction and how this episodic effect of service interactions develops over a sequence of service interactions over time.

Most of the previous research on customer mistreatment has used a between-person and cross-sectional approach. Given the recent increase in experience-sampling methods and wearable technology, future researchers should further examine longitudinal processes and the effects of customer mistreatment. This is a very large opportunity for

future researchers to conduct more fine-grained examinations of dynamic, moment-to-moment processes in customer mistreatment between customers and service employees.

Furthermore, current customer mistreatment research does not have a clear typology for customer mistreatment. Almost all previous studies have measured customer mistreatment as a broad and global construct (see Wang et al., 2011). Future researchers should investigate whether customer mistreatment differs based on its different facets, such as intensity, direction, and duration.

4.5 Conclusion

In closing, the current thesis included two empirical studies that deepen researchers' and managers' understanding of the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. More specifically, Chapter 2 presented a meta-analysis study that reviewed and statistically synthesized the state of research on the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. Chapter 3 discussed the spillover and spiraling mechanisms of resource loss behind the relationship between customer mistreatment and service employees' emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. Despite some respective limitations, in this thesis, I provided a nuanced perspective on the detrimental effect of customer mistreatment on service employees' affective and behavioral outcomes. In my thesis, I also provided valuable practical insights and future research opportunities.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Keywords used in literature search (chapter 2)

"customer mistreatment" OR "consumer mistreatment" OR "client mistreatment" OR
"customer aggression" OR "consumer aggression" OR "client aggression" OR
"customer misbehavior" OR "consumer misbehavior" OR "client misbehavior" OR
"customer misbehaviour" OR "consumer misbehaviour" OR "client misbehaviour" OR
"customer incivility" OR "consumer incivility" OR "client incivility" OR "customer
injustice" OR "consumer injustice" OR "client injustice" OR "customer abuse" OR
"consumer abuse" OR "client abuse" OR "customer retaliation" OR "consumer
retaliation" OR "client retaliation" OR "customer revenge" OR "consumer revenge" OR
"client revenge" OR "customer sabotage" OR "consumer sabotage" OR "client
sabotage" OR "customer rage" OR "consumer rage" OR "client rage" OR "customer
threat" OR "consumer threat" OR "client threat" OR "customer insult" OR "consumer
insult" OR "client insult" OR "customer blame" OR "consumer blame" OR "client
blame" OR "customer violence" OR "consumer violence" OR "client violence" OR
"customer dysfunctional behavior" OR "consumer dysfunctional behavior" OR "client
dysfunctional behavior" OR "customer dysfunctional behaviour" OR "consumer
dysfunctional behaviour" OR "client dysfunctional behaviour" OR "customer deviant
behavior" OR "consumer deviant behavior" OR "client deviant behavior" OR "customer
deviant behaviour" OR "consumer deviant behaviour" OR "client deviant behaviour"
OR "customer verbal aggression" OR "consumer verbal aggression" OR "client verbal
aggression" OR "customer verbal abuse" OR "consumer verbal abuse" OR "client
verbal abuse" OR "customer physical abuse" OR "consumer physical abuse" OR "client
physical abuse" OR "customer sexual harassment" OR "consumer sexual harassment"
OR "client sexual harassment"

Appendix B: Primary studies included in this meta-analysis (chapter 2)

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Appendix C: chapter 3 survey

Customer mistreatment

During today's working time until now, how frequently did your customers treat you in the following ways? (1 never to 5 very frequently)

- 1) *Demanded special treatment.*
- 2) *Said inappropriate things.*
- 3) *Yelled at you.*
- 4) *Used inappropriate gesture/body language.*
- 5) *Got angry at you even over minor matters.*
- 6) *Complained without reason.*
- 7) *Vented their bad mood out on you.*
- 8) *Refused to listen to you.*

Negative emotions

How much do you currently feel the following emotions. (from 1 not at all to 5 extremely)

- 1) *Angry*
- 2) *Anxious*
- 3) *Intimidated*
- 4) *Annoyed*
- 5) *Frustrated*

Emotional exhaustion

How would you rate your current feeling based on the following items? (from 1 completely disagree to 5 completely agree)

- 1) *I feel emotionally drained by my work.*
- 2) *I feel used up at the end of the workday.*
- 3) *I feel I am working too hard on my work.*