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THE IMPACTS OF SITUATIONAL FACTORS ON CONSUMER MISBEHAVIOUR IN SERVICE OUTLETS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF IRANIAN CHAIN STORES)

The aim of this study is to identify and explore the situational factors, which lead customers to misbehave in service settings. This study is designed to develop a better understanding of different drivers of misbehaviours from situational factors' perspective and examines the relationship of past misbehaviour and future misbehaviour intentions. The novelty point of this study is to illuminate the impact of situational factors on misbehaviour for the first time based on the background of Iranian culture. As the matter of fact that customer misbehaviour is prevalent in the Iranian chain stores, identifying the related antecedents especially from situation side is on the great center of attention.

Keywords: consumer, misbehaviour, situational factor, service settings, perceived risk.

Introduction. Customer misbehaviour may be defined as behavioural act by consumers, which violate the generally accepted norms of conduct in consumption situations and therefore disrupt the consumption order [1]. Incidents of abuse and mistreatment of customers have been found to be really frequent and with a profound effect on frontline employees, the organization as a whole and other customers present during incidents [2]. Managers adopt different strategies in order to cope with this problem [3]. Due to mentioned points and unavoidable harms, dealing with aberrant or threatening customers is a critical issue especially in service marketing [4].

Problem statement. Consumer misbehaviour is a significant phenomenon that affects the experience of all consumers. It is an inseparable part of consumer experience. It shows the dark side of the consumer. It results in either material loss or psychological damage, or both, to marketers, to marketing institutions, and to other consumers. Those consumers who do not commit misbehaviors are all inevitably victimized by others' misconduct [5]. Organizations accumulate direct and indirect financial costs as a result of misbehaviour [1; 2; 6].

Despite the large number of studies devoted to customer misbehaviour, the robust study of nature misbehaviour particularly from situational characteristic is limited. Furthermore, as a reason that customer misbehaviour is prevalent in Iranian chain stores, reducing and controlling this issue is on center of attention. Although existing literature offers insight into the antecedent and of individuals' dysfunctional behaviours [7; 8; 10] and multiple forms [11] of customer misbehaviour, scholarly understanding of the situational factors that underpin

such behaviours is undeveloped. This suggests that consumer misbehaviour still needs further study to fulfil this gap.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. Consumer misbehaviour is a relatively new and incomplete area of marketing research [11]. Much of the early research in this field concentrated on the examining the antecedents of customer misbehaviour and its harm. This theme is shown in the works of such researchers, as Cox et. al [7], Fullerton&Punj [12] and Reynolds&Harris [9]. Exploring the motives, drivers and severity of dysfunctional customer behaviour is also highlighted in the studies of Reynolds&Harris [9], Daunt and Harris [16]. More recent researches examined the consequences and interpersonal forms of misbehaviour in service shops which are shown in the works of such researchers, as Grégoire&Fisher [13], Harris and Reynolds [2], Huefner&Hunt [14], Rose&Neidermeyer [15].

Unsolved issues as part of the problem. A quick review of existing literature reveals that despite the robust body of literature and numerous researches in consumer behaviours, study of situational factors and its impacts are limited. Although the extant literature offers some insight into the antecedent of dysfunctional behaviours from the situational factors side [12], scholarly understanding of situational factors that underpin such behaviours is undeveloped. This suggests that consumer misbehaviour still needs further study to fulfil this pertinent gap.

The aim of this paper is to elucidate the situational antecedents of past and future customer misbehaviours by emphasizing the situational drivers which can lead consumer to misbehave. Consequently, this study contributes empirically to the existing literature by focusing on the situational factors associated past and future customer misbehaviours which has been neglected in previous studies. We utilize several concepts in management science to identify and develop the constitution of misbehaviours.

Basic material. The current study addresses the drivers of misbehaviours from situational aspect by considering their impacts in service industry (Iran chain stores). This study is undertaken by the first time on the background of Iranian culture. Accordingly, the impacts of four situational variables (loyalty intention, severity of dysfunctional misbehaviour, perceived opportunity, perceived risk) are considered on past customer misbehaviour and future misbehaviour intention. Figure 1 presents these factors and its association in this study.

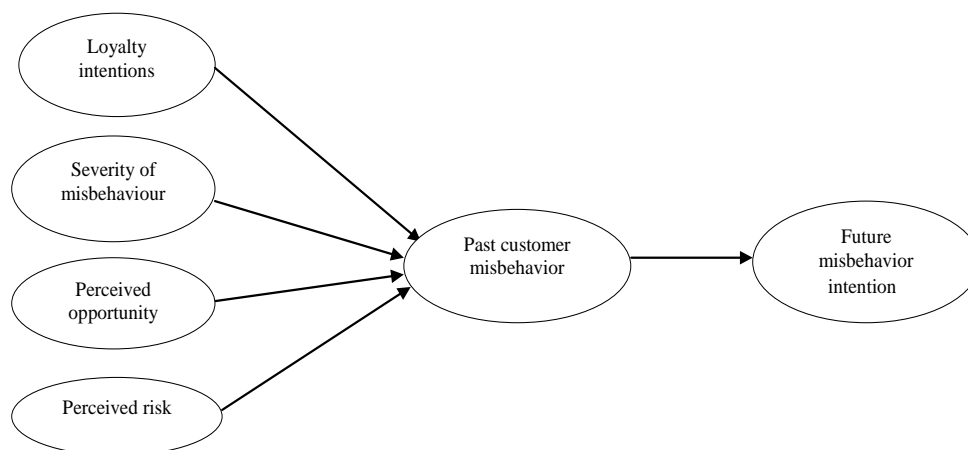


Figure 1 – Conceptual model of the impact of situational factors

Situational factors are considered as influential variables with significant effects on customer misbehaviours. Situational factors include loyalty intentions, the severity of the misbehaviour performed, and the perceived opportunity and risk.

Based on Gregoire and Fisher [13] study, when loyal customers felt betrayed by a firm, they are engaged in dysfunctional behaviours as a retaliated mechanism for compensation. In addition, Wirtz and Kum [17], find an association between with low levels of loyalty and high likelihood of committing misbehaviours especially financial motivated misbehaviours [17]. Also Daunt and Harris emphasize association between situation-specific variables such as loyalty intentions and different motives of dysfunctional behaviour [16]. So, based on the previous studies we can conclude the *first hypothesis* that loyalty intentions have a significantly negative effects on past customer misbehaviour.

In the conceptualization of the association between severity of customer misbehaviours with past misbehaviour, Fullerton and Punj [13], Lovelock [18] and Daunt and Harris [16] argue that there is a positive relationship between severity and past misbehaviour in a way that the greater severity of dysfunctional behaviours, the more likely misbehaviour will occur. Daunt and Harris [19] even suggests the broader range of misbehaviour severity including making fraudulent complaints, arguing with a fellow customer, physically striking employees, which demonstrate the great connection with dysfunctional behaviour. Therefore, we can suggest the *second hypothesis* that severity of dysfunctional misbehaviour has a significantly positive effects on past customer misbehaviour.

We can find streams of literature on perceived opportunity, which presents the positive relationship between the perceived opportunity and past customer misbehaviour. Moore [20], Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy [17] and Daunt and Harris [16], cited the positive relationship between the Perceived opportunity and different type of misbehaviours such as shoplifting and illegitimate complaining. Complementary evidence is also forwarded by Fullerton and Punj [1] study which reveals that calculating opportunism is the motivation of misbehaviours. Therefore, we can make the *third hypothesis* that perceived opportunity has a significantly positive effects on past customer misbehaviour.

Various researchers illustrate the link between Perceived risk of behaviour and past misbehaviours. To demonstrate, Cox et al. [7] draw a link between low levels of perceived risk and past misbehaviours. Similar findings are suggested by Tonglet [21] who illustrates significant effects of perceived risk on monetary driven acts of consumer theft. Supporting evidence is also suggested by Daunt and Harris [16] study which suggest that differently motivated customer misbehaviour is distinguished by differences in Perceived risk. Therefore, we can conclude the *fourth hypothesis* that perceived risk service has a significantly negative effects on past customer misbehaviour.

Studies that offer insight between relationship of past and intentions of future misbehaviour are limited and rooted in the criminological-based theory. To illustrate, based on the general theory of crime Gottfredson and Hirschi's "the best predictor of a crime is prior criminal behaviour". In this regard, two researchers Cox et al. [7] and Babin and Griffin [22] draw a link between past observation and learning from peers and the perpetration of shoplifting behaviour. Supporting this assumption, King and Dennis [23] reveal that positive association of past experience of fraudulent returning with future fraudulent returning deliberate intent. Highlighting the importance of this association, Harris and Reynolds [2] also similarly support this evidence by presenting the relationship between past engagement in dysfunctional behaviour and future misbehaviour intent. Finally, we can form the *fifth hypothesis* that past customer misbehavior has significantly positive effects on future misbehaviour intentions.

Research method. A survey-based design was deemed suitable to test the proposed research model comprising five hypotheses. Combined with structural equation modelling analysis, this approach examine the statistical significant of each hypothesis. Owing to the economic importance and fast growing market of the service industry in Iran, we consider chains stores as population sample.

Data collection and sample profile. The data for this study was collected by questionnaire. Convenience sampling is used as a method of sampling in this study due to fact that main chain stores are located in Tehran (province of Iran) particularly in the districts of 1 to 5. Questionnaires were distributed in Hyperstar, Shahrvand, Hyperme in Tehran (Districts 1 to 5). A screening question was asked to see if they had deliberately misbehaved during the past year and ensure them that their responses will remain confidential and explain them the misbehaviours definitions and its forms. The questionnaire was adapted from original English questionnaire items and then translated into Persian. Five native Iranian-English researchers were involved in the back-translation process. Customers were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire on a voluntary basis. Total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed and 600 declined to participate and 16 answered incompletely and 384 were used for analysis. The response rate is approximately is 38%. From the respondents 51% were male and 49% were female. The median age is 36 years old. The average income that they earned is less than or around 2 million Toman. Also, 67% of respondent have a university degree; however, 9% have a higher degree and others do not have a university degree. Based on the previous researches and the review of the most relevant studies the survey instrument was developed. This study employs 4 scale adapted from existing measures which presented in Table 1. A measure using a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree) to (5 = strongly agree).

Table 1 – Questionnaire items references

Variable	Adapted from
Past misbehaviour	Daunt and Harris [9]
Future misbehaviour intention	Daunt and Harris [9]
Perceived opportunity	Daunt and Harris [16]
Perceived risk	Daunt and Harris [16]
Severity of misbehaviour	Daunt Reynolds and Harris [24]
Loyalty intention	Zeithaml et al. [25]

Results. To test the developed model, we utilized the structural equations model (SEM) approach. Structural model analysis LISREL 8.50 was used to create the covariance-based structural equation model. Structural equations express relationships among several variables that can be either directly observed variables (manifest variables) or unobserved hypothetical variables (latent variables). LISREL also provides a number of m model fit indices.

Questionnaire validity was tested through a variation of the item whereby each item is qualified by a panel of experts as “clearly representative”, “somewhat representative” or “not representative” of the construct of interest. An item was retained if a high level of consensus was observed among the experts. No need to omit any item as panel of experts confirmed the clarity of constructs. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested through reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha. Reliability estimates for the all construct variables exceeded 0,7, revealing a high degree of reliability. The Cronbach Alpha indicator,

considering a minimum value of 0,7. All items were adjusted to the required levels.

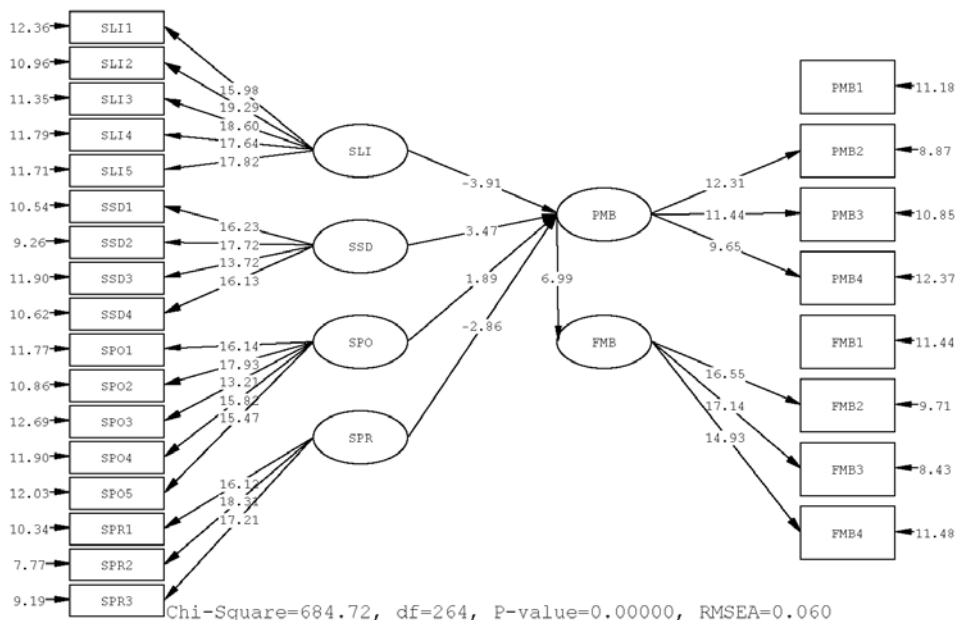
Confirmatory factor analysis, using LISREL 8.50 with maximum-likelihood estimation, was then performed on all constructs to evaluate the Convergent and discriminant validities of the measures. All items had standard t value except ego gain motivation and these items remove due to the standard t-values ($>1,96$) at significance level of 0,05. For assessing the convergent validity according to Anderson and Gerbing [26], we considered the magnitude of the factor loading of each manifest indicator on its proposed latent construct. All loadings were high (from 0,71 to 0,96) and significant, indicating convergent validity. For assessing the discriminant validity based on Anderson's criterion which states that the correlation between two latent constructs plus or minus two standard errors does not include one. This criterion was satisfied for all construct pairs.

LISREL provides a number of model fit indices. The incremental fit index (IFI) which tests the improvement of the model over a baseline model (usually a model of independence or uncorrelated variables), relative fit index (RFI) which compares a chi-square for the model tested to one from a baseline model, variations of RFI (which are not explicitly designed to provide penalties for less parsimonious models) such as the normed fit index (NFI) and non-normed fit index (NNFI or TLI), and no centrality-based indices whereby the no centrality parameter is calculated by subtracting the degrees of freedom in the model from the chi-square (χ^2/df) such as the comparative fit index (CFI), and root-mean-square error of approximation index (RMSEA). Values greater than 0,90 are desirable for IFI, RFI, CFI, NFI and NNFI while values less than 0,09 for RMSEA are acceptable. The result of model indices support a good overall model fit. Based on Figure 2, the goodness of fit indices for structural model suggest the data fit the model well ($\chi^2=648.72$, $df = 264$, $p = 0,0000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.59$, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .95, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .06, normed fit index (NFI) = .93, comparative-fit index (CFI) = .95). Analysis of result with high amount of χ^2 indicates that model fit with the data. Structural model of situational factors in T-Value mood is presented in Figure 3.

As Table 2 presented, the result shows statistical support for first, second, fourth and fifth hypotheses. In addition the result outlines in third hypothesis is not supported. First and fourth hypotheses proposing negative association between loyalty intention ($\beta = -0,63$, $t = -3,91$), Perceived risk ($\beta = -0,19$, $t = -2,86$) and acts of committing past misbehaviour. While H2 suggesting a positive association between severity of customer misbehaviour ($\beta = 0,26$, $t = 3,47$) and acts of committing past misbehaviour. The fifth hypothesis is supported as suggests the positive association between past misbehaviour ($\beta = 0,45$, $t = 6,99$). However, the third hypothesis is not supported as the association between perceived opportunity and past misbehaviour is not significant ($\beta = 0,05$, $t = 1,89$).

The findings of this study have important implications for managers and service practitioners. The background of this research problem spans several areas in the service marketing: retailing, service settings and chain stores. The outlined structures and mechanisms of this research identify the essence of dealing with customer misbehaviour and its motives. Also, our research generates the relevant insights that increase managers' awareness to handle the unavoidable issue of misbehaviours. Managers can minimize the impacts of misbehaviours by exploring the severity of misbehaviors and measuring customers' loyalty intentions.

There are numerous opportunities for future research in this area, some of which are made evident by the limitations of this study. Our research identified a number of areas where provide potentially worthwhile avenues for further studies.



Abbreviation: SLI – loyalty intention, SSD – severity of misbehavior, SPO – perceived opportunity, SPR – perceived risk, PMB – past misbehavior, FMB – future misbehaviour intentions

Figure 2 – Structural model of situational factors in standard value mood

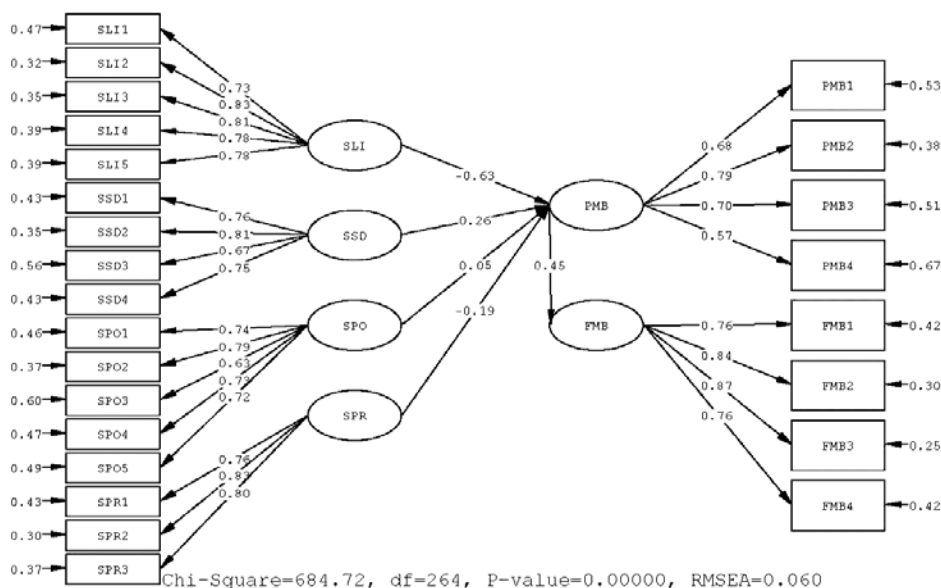


Figure 3 – Structural model of situational factors in T-Value mood

Table 2 – Structural model result

Hypothesized paths	Research Model			
	β (SE)	t- value	Result	Sign
H1:Loyalty Intention→Past misbehaviors	-0.63	-3.91	Supported	-
H2:Severity of customer misbehavior→Past misbehaviors	0.26	3.47	Supported	+
H3:Perceived opportunity→Past misbehaviors	0.05	1.89	Not Supported	+
H4:Perceived risk→Past misbehaviors	-0.19	-2.86	Supported	-
H5:Past misbehaviors → Future misbehavior intention	0.45	6.99	Supported	+

Goodness-of-fit statistics	
χ^2	684.72
d.f.	264
$\chi^2/d.f.$	2.59
CFI	0.95
NFI	0.93
RMSEA	0.06

Conclusions and directions of further researches. The current study examines the relationship between situational factors and past and future misbehaviour intentions in service outlets. This model will not only assist managers on identifying these situational motives, but it will also extend the existing knowledge on how to explore the role of these factors.

The core contribution of this study is to find the association of situational factors with past acts of dysfunctional behaviours in service contexts. The findings draw a positive link between severity of customer misbehaviors with past and future misbehaviours intentions. On the contrary, to the severity of customer misbehaviors, the associations between loyalty intentions and perceived risk with past and future misbehaviours intentions are negative.

The second contribution of this study derives from the development of previous drivers of misbehaviours models inspired by Harris and Daunt finding [19] framework. As depicted, this study does not support the statistically positive link between perceived opportunity and past misbehaviours. Our study uncovers the fact that perceived opportunity which supported in the past studies has not been supported in the current study due to cultural differences. In addition to above point, while measuring the loyalty intentions and severity of misbehaviours are somehow complex, implementing the mechanism for controlling the environment to decrease the perceived risk of committing misbehaviours seems more practical.

Future research is needed to enhance the external validity of current study model. Only additional research can determine whether this result can be replicated in other populations and contexts, as this research is limited to the chain stores in Iran and relies on self-report data from individuals. The present research deals with limited antecedents of customer misbehaviours. Future research would benefit to investigate the other situational antecedents too. Third, it would be fruitful for future research to examine these factors in different cultures that the result may not confine to Iran.

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М. Акбари, М.А. Абдолванд, Ф. Хаффари. Вплив ситуаційних факторів на поведінку споживачів торгово-сервісних точок (на прикладі мереж роздрібної торгівлі в Ірані)

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Вплив ситуаційних факторів на поведінку споживачів торгово-сервісних точок (на прикладі мереж роздрібної торгівлі в Ірані)

Метою дослідження є виявлення і аналіз ситуаційних факторів, що призводять до непорозуміння із клієнтами при наданні різних видів сервісу. Виокремлено фактори, що можуть зумовити такі непорозуміння з урахуванням минулого досвіду відносин між надавачами послуг та споживачами. Дослідження авторів здійснено на прикладі мереж роздрібної торгівлі в Ірані.

Ключові слова: споживач, неадекватна поведінка, ситуаційний фактор, характеристики послуг, сприйманий ризик.

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Влияние ситуационных факторов на поведение потребителей торгово-сервисных точек (на примере сетей розничной торговли в Иране)

Целью исследования является выявление и анализ ситуационных факторов, которые приводят к недоразумениям с клиентами при предоставлении различных видов сервиса. Выделены факторы, которые могут обусловить такие недоразумения с учетом прошлого опыта отношений между поставщиками услуг и потребителями. Исследования авторов осуществлено на примере сетей розничной торговли в Иране.

Ключевые слова: потребитель, неадекватное поведение, ситуационный фактор, характеристики услуг, воспринимаемый риск.

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