



Vaasan yliopisto  
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

OSUVA Open  
Science

This is a self-archived – parallel published version of this article in the publication archive of the University of Vaasa. It might differ from the original.

## How does service sabotage stimulate customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior? The roles of guilt and locus of control

**Author(s):** Chen, Yuanhua; Zhao, Hongdan; Zhou, Qiongyao; Zong, Shaofang

**Title:** How does service sabotage stimulate customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior? The roles of guilt and locus of control

**Year:** 2025

**Version:** Accepted manuscript

**Copyright** ©2025 Emerald Publishing Limited. This manuscript version is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY–NC 4.0) license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

### **Please cite the original version:**

Chen, Y., Zhao, H., Zhou, Q., & Zong, S. (2025). How does service sabotage stimulate customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior? The roles of guilt and locus of control. *Journal of Services Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-08-2024-0432>

# **How does service sabotage stimulate customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior? The roles of guilt and locus of control**

## **Abstract**

**Purpose** - The purpose of this study is to explain how and why employees' involvement in service sabotage stimulates customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, and to explore the mediating role of guilt and the moderating role of locus of control.

**Design/methodology/approach** - Three studies were conducted, including two experimental studies and a questionnaire study. This study used Process and PLS-SEM to analyze the data.

**Findings** - Service sabotage can trigger employees' customer-oriented OCB, and guilt mediates this direct relationship. Moreover, the internal locus of control intensifies the direct effect between service sabotage and guilt, and the indirect relationship between service sabotage and customer-oriented OCB through guilt.

**Originality/value** - This study is the first to verify the consequences of service sabotage from a perpetrator-centered perspective, revealing the internal mechanism and boundary conditions of service sabotage stimulating customer-oriented OCB, and expanding the application scenarios of moral compensation theory.

**Practical implications** - This study provides suggestions for how organizations can effectively prevent and respond to employee service sabotage and for managers to provide targeted measures for different types of service sabotage.

**Key Words:** Service sabotage, Guilt, Locus of control, Customer-oriented OCB

**Paper type:** Research paper

How does service sabotage stimulate customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior? The roles of guilt and locus of control

## 1. Introduction

High-quality service is the key to success in the tourism and hotel industry (Kenar and Yeşiltaş, 2024; Le *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, organizations continue to regulate the behavior of front-line hotel service workers (Patterson *et al.*, 2010), but it is difficult to completely eradicate hotel employees' sabotage behaviors that harm the customers' service experience, such as leaking customers' information and ignoring company service standards. How to deal with this phenomenon and change employees' behavior in the subsequent service process has become an urgent problem for hotel enterprises. Service sabotage is defined as "organizational member behaviors that are intentionally designed negatively to affect service" (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002, p.166). This behavior damages the profitability of enterprises (Harris and Ogbonna, 2009) and reduces employees' service creativity (Lyu *et al.*, 2023). [In view of the harmfulness of such behavior, scholars have tried to clarify the antecedents and formation mechanisms of such behavior to explain the occurrence of service sabotage, but few scholars have specifically studied the consequences of service sabotage \(Liu \*et al.\*, 2022\).](#) Through these studies, it was found that service sabotage can be divided into retaliatory and non-retaliatory types according to different motivations, and the latter is the focus of this study. Related research suggests that service sabotage does not always have a negative impact on employees (Liu *et al.*, 2022). In particular, employees who exhibit non-retaliatory service sabotage may adopt constructive behaviors in subsequent service activities. [Therefore, this study aims to](#)

explore the process of employees' behavior response formation after engaging in service sabotage.

Although a large amount of literature has revealed the formation mechanism of service sabotage, few scholars have specifically studied the consequences of service sabotage (Liu *et al.*, 2022). The limited empirical studies that do exist have primarily focused on the impact of service sabotage on the organization, as well as on the responses of victims and bystanders (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002; Hu *et al.*, 2020; Lyu *et al.*, 2023), while largely neglecting how such behavior affects the perpetrators themselves and their subsequent service behaviors. As opposed to victim-centered and bystander-centered, this study hopes to draw on moral compensation theory to answer the question of how employees deal with their own involvement in service sabotage behavior from a perpetrator-centered perspective. Moral compensation theory states that individuals often take the initiative to exhibit positive or moral behaviors to compensate for previous unethical behaviors (Zhong *et al.*, 2010). We thus infer that the perpetrators of service sabotage will trigger their moral dissonance and experience changes in moral emotions (such as guilt). As a result, they may engage in compensatory behaviors for all customers to maintain a moral balance in the subsequent service process (He *et al.*, 2023). Guilt, as a typical self-conscious moral emotion, is a negative emotion that occurs when employees realize that they have violated moral standards. It can prompt employees to hope to find a way to correct their mistakes (Eisenberg, 2000). Compared to other-directed moral emotions (e.g., anger, contempt, and disgust), guilt is a self-directed emotion (Greenbaum *et al.*, 2020; Haidt, 2003). While the former often leads to interpersonal distancing and destructive behaviors, guilt

is closely associated with prosocial behavior and requires individuals to attribute the harm caused to others to themselves (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Ni *et al.*, 2024; Wang and Jiang, 2023). Therefore, this study examines guilt as an important explanatory mechanism for the consequences of negative interpersonal interactions across organizations to explain how subsequent service behaviors are formed after perpetrators engage in service sabotage.

Moreover, moral compensation theory suggests that individual differences are the key conditions that affect moral compensation mechanisms, individual compensatory moral emotions (i.e., guilt) are formed from the damaged moral self-image through a moral cleansing mechanism, and the degree of this mechanism varies depending on the moral reasoning and moral attribution of the unethical behavior (Liao *et al.*, 2024; Mullen and Monin, 2016). Following this research line, the present study introduced locus of control as a key moderator variable in the relationship between service sabotage and employee guilt. Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can control the events in their lives, including internal and external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Locus of control plays an important role in an individual's moral decision-making process (Forte, 2005). Individuals with an internal locus of control have higher moral reasoning (Murk and Addleman, 1992), can effectively judge the morality of their own behavior (Valentine *et al.*, 2018), and thus can enhance their moral behavior intentions in moral dilemmas (Black *et al.*, 2022; Toti *et al.*, 2021). Thus, locus of control determines actor pressure from the damage of service sabotage on moral self-image and then stimulates varying degrees of guilt.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

### 2.1 Moral Compensation Theory

Moral compensation theory analyzes the continuous process of moral behavior judgment and selection and points out that when employees engage in unethical behavior, they will have a compensatory mentality, thereby stimulating more moral behavior in subsequent behaviors to make up for it (Zhong *et al.*, 2010). Although both moral compensation and moral licensing emphasize the transformation of individual behavior, their mechanisms of action are different. The former emphasizes that after an individual engages in unethical behavior, in order to restore moral balance and self-image, they will adopt more moral subsequent behaviors (Zhong *et al.*, 2010), while the latter emphasizes that after an individual engages in positive behavior, they may believe that they have accumulated “moral capital”, making them more likely to engage in unethical behavior in the future (Liao *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, moral compensation theory has been widely used by scholars to explore the reactions and behavioral responses of individuals in organizations after participating in negative interpersonal interactions (Liao *et al.*, 2018; Lowery *et al.*, 2021; Zhao and Ma, 2025). For example, Pan *et al.* (2023) pointed out the applicability of the theory of moral compensation when studying the consequences and behavioral responses of interpersonal behavior (i.e., knowledge hiding). These studies confirm the presence of moral compensation in interpersonal interactions within organizations, both among colleagues and between supervisors and subordinates. They emphasize employees’ compensatory behavior toward the organization or colleagues within the organization after engaging in unethical behavior. However, these studies are primarily confined to the context of

interpersonal interactions within organizations.

In recent years, scholars have begun to explore moral compensation beyond the organizational boundary. For instance, Liu et al. (2025) examined tourists' pro-environmental behaviors toward destinations from a moral compensation perspective. This study represents an important step in expanding the scope of prior research, which had focused exclusively on internal organizational dynamics. Nonetheless, it shifts entirely to an external context, leaving a gap in understanding how moral compensation operates across both internal and external domains. In summary, existing research on moral compensation theory has yet to explore the dynamics of interpersonal interactions that span both internal and external organizational contexts. Therefore, referring to the ideas of previous research, this study attempts to apply the moral compensation theory to the study of interpersonal interaction behavior across organizations. The moral compensation theory can provide a holistic theoretical framework for understanding employees' reactions and behavioral responses after engaging in non-retaliatory service sabotage behavior.

Moral compensation theory focuses on sequential moral decision-making and clarifies the impact of an individual's previous behavior on subsequent behavior, including moral licensing and moral cleansing (Liu *et al.*, 2025). This theory states that an individual's previous unethical decision will lead to an opposite moral stance in subsequent decisions. In other words, individuals' moral decisions are often short-sighted. When an individual performs an unethical behavior before, he or she behaves more ethically in subsequent actions (Zhong *et al.*, 2010). Mullen and Monin (2016) complemented this theory and also argued that individuals'

perceptions and thinking about the morality of past behaviors can lead to inconsistent behavioral decisions in the future. In fact, most individuals tend to emphasize the importance of morality in their concepts and think about whether their actions conform to moral standards (Aquino and Reed, 2002; Wang *et al.*, 2022). In this regard, the moral compensation theory also emphasizes the importance of moral self-image to individuals, and individuals tend to maintain a balance in their moral self-image (Zhong *et al.*, 2010).

Given that service sabotage not only harms customers but also causes losses to their organizations. Therefore, this type of behavior is not accepted by the moral standards of the organization and the public, and it is considered unethical behavior (Huang *et al.*, 2019). This study intends to explore the reactions and consequences of perpetrators after participating in this unethical behavior. Therefore, we believe that this research question can be explained by the moral compensation model. After employees participate in service sabotage, they will think about whether their behavior complies with moral standards and change their own moral balance and moral image, thus triggering compensatory psychological and emotional changes, and show compensatory behavior (customer-orientation OCB) to all customers in the subsequent service process.

## ***2.2 Service Sabotage***

Harris and Ogbonna (2002) defined service sabotage as: “organizational member behaviors that are intentionally designed negatively to affect service” (p. 166). This behavior was initially regarded as organizational deviant behavior of employees, which refers to the behavior of employees deliberately sabotaging service to different objects (the organization,

colleagues, and customers) during the service process, such as being rude to customers and arbitrarily lowering service standards. Although the target objects of service sabotage are different, customers are still its main interaction objects, and customer-oriented sabotage is a narrow subset of service sabotage. Huang *et al.* (2019) refer to the concept of service sabotage to give the concept and manifestation of customer-oriented service. It can be seen that customer-oriented service is a topic that needs to be focused on in service sabotage research. As research continues to deepen, scholars have begun to focus on service sabotage from an ethical perspective. Service sabotage reduces service quality. This behavior harms the interests of customers and organizations, violates broad moral standards, and is also considered as the unethical behavior (Huang *et al.*, 2019). In fact, the unethical nature of service sabotage has been confirmed by scholars. Many studies have shown that service sabotage is a behavioral response to individual moral cognition or moral emotions (Jiang *et al.*, 2023; Zulfiqar *et al.*, 2025). These studies have confirmed to a certain extent that service sabotage is a behavioral response under moral decision-making. Therefore, based on the above viewpoints, service sabotage can be regarded as unethical behavior.

Given the prevalence, harmfulness, and immorality of service sabotage, service sabotage has become a research topic that the academic community has focused on. A review of research related to service sabotage shows that current scholars focus on antecedents, clarifying how and when different factors inside and outside the organization can induce employees' service sabotage. The influencing factors within the organization mainly include organizational environment, leadership behavior, interpersonal relationships, and employees themselves, such

as organizational dehumanization (Gip *et al.*, 2022), organizational AI use (Ma and Ye, 2022), exploitative leadership (Ye *et al.*, 2022), leadership knowledge hiding (Zulfiqar *et al.*, 2025), negative gossip (Lyu *et al.*, 2024), and organizational identification (Wang, 2023). The influencing factors outside the organization mainly focus on customer behavior, such as customer mistreatment (Wang *et al.*, 2023) and customer verbal aggression (Lin *et al.*, 2022).

Few scholars have paid attention to the consequences of service sabotage. The few empirical studies that have been conducted have only clarified the impact of service sabotage on the organization and the behavioral responses of victims and bystanders, including reducing organizational reputation (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002), triggering customers to take deviant behaviors (Hu *et al.*, 2020), and reducing colleagues' service creativity (Lyu *et al.*, 2023). In addition, existing consequence studies only focus on the explanatory mechanisms of individual cognition and behavior, ignoring the important role of emotions. In fact, emotions are an important topic in service sabotage research (Akhtar *et al.*, 2025; Lunardo and Saintives, 2017; Lyu *et al.*, 2024), and have been widely used to explain the formation mechanism of service sabotage. For example, research has shown that employees' emotional resources and negative emotions influence the likelihood of engaging in service sabotage (Liu *et al.*, 2022; Zhao and Han, 2025). In addition, negative emotions have been found to intensify the impact of customer mistreatment on employees' service sabotage behavior (Wang *et al.*, 2011). While these studies offer valuable insights into the formation of service sabotage, they mainly stay at the level of emotional valence, that is, they regard emotions as an "intensity dimension" variable, while ignoring the differences in cognitive evaluation, moral connotations, and behavioral tendencies

contained in specific types of emotions. Therefore, this study believes that it is necessary to pay attention to the specific emotional reactions of employees after participating in service sabotage, so as to provide a more comprehensive discussion for the study of emotions in service sabotage.

Based on a literature review of many antecedents of service sabotage, we found that employees' motivations for engaging in service sabotage can be divided into retaliatory and non-retaliatory. On the one hand, employees may have retaliatory motivations for negative events such as abusive leadership and thus exhibit service sabotage behaviors (Park and Kim, 2019). Employees can maintain their inner balance and achieve restorative justice through such retaliatory service sabotage behaviors (Finsterwalder and Tombs, 2021). On the other hand, employees may have non-retaliatory motivations for reasons such as organizational AI adoption and thus exhibit service sabotage behaviors (Ma and Ye, 2022). In addition, scholars have begun to pay attention to the motivations behind individual negative behaviors. Lin *et al.* (2025) further subdivided abusive leadership behavior into instrumental motivation and non-instrumental motivation in their research. Building on this line of thought, the former emphasizes that the formation of individual negative behavior is to maintain one's own status or interests. For example, employees can improve their self-esteem by maintaining their own psychological balance through retaliatory service sabotage (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002). The latter emphasizes that the formation of individual negative behavior is more based on non-instrumental motivations and is reactive or emotionally driven. [This non-instrumental motivation often manifests as a habitual or implicit response to situational pressure, rather than](#)

direct retaliation against a specific target. This study interprets non-retaliatory service sabotage as a behavioral pattern that is not oriented toward revenge but rather stems from inertia or stress. Therefore, this study believes that service sabotage can be divided into retaliatory service sabotage and non-retaliatory service sabotage.

Compared to retaliatory service sabotage, which is typically triggered by specific incidents and directed at clear targets (Cheng *et al.*, 2020; Hongbo *et al.*, 2020), such targeted behaviors are more easily detected by organizations and can be effectively suppressed. In contrast, non-retaliatory service sabotage behaviors, which are often driven by factors such as emotional labor and job stress, are more prevalent in organizations due to the widespread presence of these stressors. A meta-analysis by Liu *et al.* (2022) confirmed the diverse antecedents of non-retaliatory service sabotage. Moreover, since non-retaliatory service sabotage is not directed at specific targets, such behavior is often habitual or carried out privately by employees. Harris and Ogbonna (2002) noted that habitual and covert forms of service sabotage are particularly difficult for managers to detect due to their concealed nature. Therefore, this study can infer that non-retaliatory service sabotage is more common in organizations than retaliatory service sabotage. Lin *et al.* (2025) suggest that individuals who engage in negative behavior driven by reactive or emotional motives are more likely to experience a sense of moral compensation, whereas those who act based on instrumental motives tend not to feel guilt and may even derive a sense of self-satisfaction. In other words, compared to retaliatory service sabotage, non-retaliatory service sabotage is more likely to activate employees' moral compensation mechanisms. Considering the practical characteristics

of service sabotage and the research purpose of focusing on individual active coping, this study focuses on non-retaliatory service sabotage as its core subject. Specifically, based on the theory of moral compensation, this study proposes a theoretical model of employees' emotional and behavioral responses after participating in non-retaliatory service sabotage (as shown in Figure 1), and explores the mediating role of guilt and the moderating role of locus of control.

Take in Figure 1 Here

### ***2.3 Service Sabotage and Guilt***

Moral compensation theory suggests that most individuals are concerned with their moral self-image, and their ethical behavior is influenced by how they perceive themselves morally. When individuals engage in unethical behavior, they tend to compensate by performing more ethical actions to restore and maintain a balanced moral self-image (Zhong *et al.*, 2010). Previous research has highlighted the strong connection between moral emotions and an individual's moral self-image (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2022). Bonner *et al.* (2017) found that moral emotions signal a perceived threat to one's moral self-image. Additionally, from the theoretical perspective of moral cleansing, emotions play a crucial role in the moral compensation process (Liao *et al.*, 2018; Zhao and Ma, 2025). Based on this, the present study proposes that employees who engage in service sabotage experience guilt as an emotional response to the perceived damage to their moral self-image.

Guilt is a self-conscious moral emotion closely linked to an individual's moral self-concept. It arises when a person perceives themselves as the cause or potential cause of

another's suffering or harm (Jennings *et al.*, 2015). Individuals possess moral self-regulation mechanisms that help restrain unethical behavior through both internal cognitive processes and external social influences (Chen *et al.*, 2023). This study suggests that when employees engage in service sabotage, their moral self-image may be undermined due to internal self-reflection, leading to feelings of guilt. As moral agents, employees evaluate their actions against societal moral standards after engaging in service sabotage, leading them to recognize the unethical nature of their behavior (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Huang *et al.*, 2019). The inconsistency between employees' perception of their unethical actions and their desired moral self-image creates discomfort, which in turn triggers feelings of guilt (Dadaboyev *et al.*, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, previous studies have confirmed that engaging in unethical behavior can elicit varying degrees of negative moral emotions in individuals (Bonner *et al.*, 2017; Tang *et al.*, 2020). Besides, research on moral emotions suggests that positive or negative feedback can elicit corresponding moral emotions, which in turn influence future behavior (Liang, 2022; Tang *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, guilt manifests as an emotional reaction tied to interpersonal associations. Interpersonal conflicts and causing harm to others trigger individual guilt (Heng and Fehr, 2022). Therefore, we proposed Hypothesis 1:

Hypothesis 1: Service sabotage is positively related to guilt.

#### **2.4 Service Sabotage, Guilt, and Customer-oriented OCB**

Individuals are inclined to maintain a positive moral self-image (Aquino and Reed, 2002; Gino and Margolis, 2011). According to moral compensation theory, when unethical behavior threatens an individual's moral self-image, it motivates them to engage in moral actions to

restore their moral image (Zhong *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, from the perspective of moral cleansing, Zhong and Liljenquist (2006) suggest that individuals can alleviate the negative emotions caused by a damaged moral self-image through compensatory moral behavior.

As previously discussed, guilt is a moral emotion formed based on the damage to an individual's moral self-image. Guilt is a beneficial moral emotion based on the individual immoral cognition. Such a feeling forces employees to reflect on their unethical behavior and provides critical feedback for their subsequent behavior (Ogunfowora *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, guilt can stimulate compensation motivation and may spur employees to demonstrate organizational citizenship behavior (Lowery *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, Liao *et al.* (2018) found that guilt resulting from one's own negative actions can lead to an increase in constructive behaviors.

In the current study, the constructive behaviors we focus on are customer-oriented OCB of service sabotage perpetrators toward all customers during subsequent service processes. Employees can compensate for the guilt caused by service sabotage through these behaviors. This study believes that service sabotage actors use customer-oriented OCB as compensatory behaviors to alleviate guilt for two reasons. First, customer-oriented OCB helps to reshape the moral self-image and reduce employees' sense of moral dissonance. As a constructive behavior that goes beyond formal job responsibilities, customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior fulfills an altruistic moral obligation, contributing to the enhancement of one's moral self-image (Liu *et al.*, 2019). In doing so, it serves as a means of alleviating the guilt induced by service sabotage.

Second, the social functional perspective of emotions suggests that emotions help individuals maintain social relationships and interactions (Feinberg *et al.*, 2020). Accordingly, employees expect to maintain good social relationships at work and hope to cope with their guilt by maintaining their own image (Liang, 2022). Customer-oriented OCB can serve as an important strategy for employees to restore their self-image in social interactions (Lee and Gong, 2024). By enhancing customer satisfaction and service quality, such behavior helps rebuild relationships with affected customers and strengthens employees' perceived self-image among colleagues and supervisors (Peng *et al.*, 2022). This theoretical perspective aligns with the coping strategies for negative moral emotions proposed by Burmeister *et al.* (2019). In conclusion, employees are aware of the harm of their service sabotage behavior and have the pressure of the damage to their moral self-image, which can increase their sense of guilt. Thereby, employees will make up for the losses of customers and the organization through customer-oriented OCB to alleviate the sense of guilt. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited.

Hypothesis 2: Guilt mediates the relationship between service sabotage and customer-oriented OCB.

### ***2.5 The Moderating Role of Locus of Control***

Moral compensation theory states that individual characteristics can enhance or weaken the moral compensation process (Yuan *et al.*, 2018). Individual differences lead to inconsistent cognition of unethical behavior, which further affects the generation of their own moral emotions (Li *et al.*, 2023). In addition, the cognitive evaluation theory of emotion also emphasizes that the formation of specific emotions is also affected by the relevance of the goal.

The more relevant a specific event or stimulus is to an individual, the stronger the emotion it evokes (Lazarus, 1991). In other words, employees' attributional evaluation of service sabotage will affect the formation of discrete emotions. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the intensity of guilt experienced by employees after engaging in service sabotage is shaped by their moral judgments and attribution processes. Specifically, this study focuses on locus of control as a boundary condition for moral compensation mechanisms to explain when service sabotage stimulates customer-oriented OCB.

The locus of control is regarded by scholars as one of the important characteristics of an individual's core self-evaluation (Judge and Bono, 2001). It was later confirmed to be an independent variable and an important variable of individual differences, reflecting the individual's belief in the degree of control over events in his or her life (Galvin et al., 2018; Rotter, 1996). Although this variable is different from typical moral characteristics such as moral consciousness and moral identity, the attribution and control beliefs emphasized by the locus of control can reflect the individual's moral efficacy and are applied in the field of moral decision-making (Toti *et al.*, 2021). This stable individual trait has been proven to affect employee moral intention and moral cognition (Husser *et al.*, 2017; Toti *et al.*, 2021). For example, Valentine *et al.* (2018) not only found in their study that the existence of ethical codes is positively correlated with internal locus of control, but also confirmed that individuals with an internal locus of control tend to use internal moral standards to evaluate their behavior and are more likely to regard uncivilized behavior within the organization as unethical behavior. Therefore, locus of control is an individual difference that influences moral intention and

decision-making, shaping how employees morally evaluate and emotionally respond to unethical events (Kim *et al.*, 2020).

In addition, differences in individual locus of control can affect their attribution process for unethical events (e.g., service sabotage), thereby influencing the formation of their emotions. Employees with an internal locus of control ascribe events and behavioral outcomes to themselves (Szilagyi *et al.*, 1976) and tend to maintain the consistency of moral judgments and behaviors. They are more sensitive to organizational ethics (Husser *et al.*, 2017; Mulki and Laskk, 2019). External locus of control employees attribute events to fate and environment (Rotter, 1996). They easily shirk responsibility and have difficulty generating ethical work intentions. In other words, compared with employees with an external locus of control, on the one hand, employees with an internal locus of control are more likely to regard service sabotage as unethical behavior, which affects their perception of their own moral image (Valentine *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, employees with an internal locus of control are more likely to realize that the harm caused to others by service sabotage comes from themselves, satisfying the attribution needs of guilt formation, and thus are more likely to form self-oriented moral emotions. The connection between attribution and moral emotions has been verified by scholars (Shockley *et al.*, 2022). In summary, individual differences in locus of control can cause differences in the intensity of individual guilt by affecting the individual's moral judgment process and attribution process.

Specifically, employees with an internal locus of control have higher moral judgment criteria and are more likely to view service sabotage as unethical behavior (Valentine *et al.*,

2018). Such employees perceive the inconsistency between service sabotage and their moral standards. Thus, they will feel the pressure of the damaged moral self-image, and then arise the feeling of guilt. Besides, locus of control is related to the attribution of responsibility for individual behavior. The internal locus of control employees use internal morality to evaluate their behaviors and attribute service sabotage to themselves (Valentine *et al.*, 2018), they will reflect and undertake responsibility for their own decisions (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, after committing service sabotage, they are more aware of the harm caused to others by their own behavior and are more likely to feel guilty.

Conversely, employees with an external locus of control feel less guilt after committing service sabotage. These employees tend to make unethical decisions and always use moral disengagement to rationalize their unethical behaviors (Detert *et al.*, 2008). The external locus of control employees who realize that their behavior violates ethical norms is difficult. Moreover, these employees may attribute service sabotage to external uncontrollable factors (Rotter, 1966), such as the incivility behavior of customers or leaders. Thereby, they will ignore the harm caused by service sabotage (Ye *et al.*, 2022). Taken together, employees characterized by an external locus of control exhibit diminished guilt from service sabotage; they often engage in slippery slope behavior. The following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 3: Locus of control moderates the relationship between service sabotage and guilt. This positive relationship will be stronger when employees are characterized by a high internal (rather than external) locus of control.

Guilt mediates the effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB, whereas locus

of control further moderates this association between service sabotage and guilt. From the above assumptions, this study proposed that locus of control moderates the indirect effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB through guilt. Specifically, internal control employees feel more guilt for service sabotage behaviors. Thus, they stimulate the moral compensation mechanism and show customer-oriented OCB. Conversely, external locus of control employees attribute their behaviors to external factors (such as customers and leaders); thus, they hardly form guilt and follow-up moral compensation behaviors (such as customer-oriented OCB). Consequently, this study gives Hypothesis 4:

Hypothesis 4: Locus of control moderates the indirect effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB through guilt. This indirect effect will be strengthened when employees have an internal (rather than external) locus of control.

### **3. Method**

#### ***3.1 Study 1a***

##### *3.1.1 Samples and Research Design*

This study invited 160 hotel service employees to participate in this situational experiment through the Credamo platform in China (Guan *et al.*, 2024; Xie *et al.*, 2024). The platform enjoys broad application in the acquisition of data across various research domains, including tourism management, organizational management, and applied psychology. To enhance the reliability and effectiveness of the sample, full-time sales staff were selected on the Credamo platform for scenario-based experiments in accordance with the experimental setup. Participants were assured that all their responses would be kept confidential and solely used

for academic research purposes. Additionally, the present study incorporated attention-check measures and systematically removed the samples that did not meet the established criteria for these tests. We finally obtained 131 available samples. They were randomly assigned to read about service sabotage (N=65) or normal service events (N=66). This sample size is larger than the 128-sample size recommended by G\*Power when the 80% efficiency condition is reached under the medium effect size (0.25) of 2 experimental groups (Xu *et al.*, 2022).

Locus of control is an individual trait and a continuous variable. Following Xu *et al.* (2022) approach, this study first measured the participants' locus of control (Judge *et al.*, 2005). Afterward, participants were asked to imagine themselves as a hotel receptionist and invited to read a service process scenario. Then, participants answered relevant questionnaires and manipulated the situational operation of service sabotage.

This study draws on the approach of Su *et al.* (2022). It designs experimental scenario materials based on real events reviewed online by OTAs (online travel agencies). Participants were asked to read the introduction to the experimental materials: *"Suppose you are Manager Wang, a room service worker in Hotel A. At 9 o'clock in the evening, you receive a call from a woman who is staying with a child in Room 1501. She tells you that the TV in the room has no picture after it is turned on, and it is pitch black. She hopes you can help with this problem."* Next, it is a manipulation description of a service sabotage.

**Service sabotage (Yes):** You replied rudely: "It's so late. Why did you even call me? Someone will handle it for you later." After you hang up the phone, you go about your business. Ten minutes later, you received an inquiry call from Room 1501 again, and you answered

impatiently: “Don’t rush me. The maintenance staff is already on the way. Not watching TV for a while won't kill anyone.” You hang up the phone without waiting for the customer to reply. Another 10 minutes later, when you were chatting with the maintenance personnel, the customer from 1501 urged you again, and you replied impatiently: “Hello, the maintenance personnel have arrived, so there is no need to call anymore. I will go up and solve it for you immediately.” Then, you led the maintenance staff to knock on the door rudely to vent your bad mood, and go in and repair the TV.

**Service sabotage (No):** You replied enthusiastically: “Hi, I’m sorry for the inconvenience caused to you. I will immediately contact the logistics maintenance department of our hotel and fix this problem for you as soon as possible. Please wait patiently.” After hanging up the phone, you immediately communicate with the logistics maintenance department and inform the maintenance personnel of the corresponding room number and the problems. After 5 minutes, when the maintenance personnel arrived, you dialed the phone number in room 1501 and asked in a gentle tone: “Hi, I’m sorry to keep you waiting, our professional TV maintenance personnel are ready. If it’s convenient for you now, I’ll take my colleague there to solve the problem of no picture on the TV for you.” Then, you knock on the door gently with the maintenance staff, and after getting permission, go in and repair the TV.

### *3.1.2 Measures*

Participants rated service sabotage, guilt, and locus of control by recalling the experimental materials. This study also measured the demographic characteristics of the samples (see Appendix A for details). The measurement scales of the variables involved in the

study adopted mature scales (see Appendix B for details). We translated into Chinese according to the standard translation-back translation procedure and adjusted appropriately according to the specific Chinese situation (Brislin, 1970). All variables were measured using a Likert 7-point scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 7 representing strongly agree.

**Service sabotage.** This study focuses on non-retaliatory service sabotage. We deleted the items with explicit retaliatory intentions from the scale developed by Chi *et al.* (2015) and finally used a five-item scale to measure service sabotage. A sample item was “I have mistreated customers deliberately.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this measuring scale was 0.955.

**Guilt.** This study followed the approach of Liao *et al.* (2018) to measure guilt, using three items from Tangney *et al.* (1996) and three emotional adjectives (“repentant,” “guilty,” and “blameworthy”) to describe the feelings after participating in service sabotage. An example item is “I feel repentant for doing intentionally harmful to the service.” The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.966.

**Locus of control.** Following the approach of Judge *et al.* (2005), the locus of control used the six-item scale of Levenson (1981). A sample item was “My life is determined by my own actions.” The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.947.

### *3.1.3 Results of Manipulation Checks*

This study conducts a manipulation test on service sabotage. The results of the t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the employee’s service sabotage and normal service behavior ( $M_{\text{Yes}} = 5.194$ ,  $M_{\text{No}} = 1.867$ ,  $t(129) = 20.035$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which indicated that the manipulation of the service sabotage was successful. In addition, the study

also used dichotomous items to test the familiarity and authenticity of the situation (Du *et al.*, 2014). In the authenticity test, about 84.7% of the participants believed that the experimental scene was possible, and 82.4% of the participants believed that the experimental scene was real, which further confirmed that the manipulation of service sabotage was feasible.

### 3.1.4 Hypotheses Test

The t-test results showed that the two groups had significant differences in guilt. Compared with the group without service sabotage, the participants in the group with service sabotage had a high level of guilt ( $M_{\text{Yes}} = 5.103$ ,  $M_{\text{No}} = 2.136$ ,  $t(129) = 14.062$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was verified.

According to the suggestion of Su *et al.* (2022), this study used PROCESS to test Hypothesis 3. The independent variable, service sabotage, was coded as 1 (service sabotage) and 0 (no service sabotage). From Table 1, the finding demonstrated a significant impact of the interaction between locus of control and service sabotage on guilt (Effect=0.7078, SE=0.1514,  $t(131) = 4.6741$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was confirmed. To gain deeper insights into the moderating role of locus of control, this study follows the approach of previous scholars (Banik and Rabbane, 2023; Lin and Chou, 2022) by applying the Johnson–Neyman technique to conduct a floodlight analysis (Krishna, 2016; Spiller *et al.*, 2013). Figure 2 presents the results of the Johnson–Neyman technique, indicating that the relationship between service sabotage and guilt becomes statistically significant when the locus of control exceeds a value of 2.6216.

Take in Table 1 and Figure 2 Here

### *3.1.5 Study 1a Discussion*

Study 1a provided preliminary support for the theoretical hypothesis of this study through experimental analysis. However, given that the scenario simulation experiment cannot effectively and completely simulate the actual scenario of service sabotage, the external validity of Study 1a has certain limitations. Therefore, this study conducted a supplementary analysis through Study 1b using an experiment of personal recall of workplace service sabotage, tested Hypothesis 1 again, and explored the differentiated responses to different types of service sabotage (non-retaliatory and retaliatory) to provide greater external validity.

## **3.2 Study 1b**

### *3.2.1 Samples*

In Study 1b, we manipulated employees' service sabotage using a critical incident technique by asking participants to recall their own service sabotage events (retaliatory or non-retaliatory) or non-service sabotaging events. Before Study 1b officially began, we conducted in-depth interviews with frontline service employees to obtain actual examples and key information on retaliatory and non-retaliatory service sabotage behaviors, including motivations for engaging in service sabotage (e.g., revenge on customers, and saving energy). The interview results also showed that it is feasible to divide service sabotage into retaliatory and non-retaliatory service sabotage. We recruited frontline service employees to participate in this study through an online data collection platform (Su *et al.*, 2022). Each respondent will receive 10 RMB (about \$1.5) after the study. The sample includes 257 full-time frontline service employees, of which 112 are male ( $SD=0.497$ ), 63.4% are aged 18-40, and 85.2% have

a bachelor's degree or below.

### *3.2.2 Procedure and Experimental Design*

Participants were told that employees could perform service sabotage and normal service in their daily service process, and that the motivations for service sabotage included retaliatory motivation and non-retaliatory motivation. Next, employees were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: service sabotage (retaliatory service sabotage or non-retaliatory service sabotage) or a control group (non-service sabotage).

#### **Retaliatory service sabotage condition (N=86):**

Participants were asked to think about the service sabotage behaviors that occurred during the past month due to retaliatory motives: In your daily work, due to negative events (such as uncivilized customer language, abusive leadership, organizational unfairness), you deliberately sabotaged the service during the service process due to retaliatory motives, including being negative and deliberately abusing customers.

#### **Non-retaliatory service sabotage condition (N=85):**

Participants were asked to think about the service sabotage behaviors that occurred in the past month due to non-retaliatory motives during the service process: In your daily work, due to your own reasons (such as work pressure, negative emotions, profit-driven), you deliberately sabotaged the service during the service process due to non-retaliatory motives, including arbitrarily delaying the service and arbitrarily lowering the service standards.

#### **Non-service sabotage condition (N=86):**

Participants were asked to think about the normal service behaviors in interpersonal

interactions during the service process in the past month: In your daily work, you provide normal services to customers according to company regulations, including receiving customers in a timely manner, treating customers in a friendly manner, providing timely services, and complying with organizational service rules and regulations.

Immediately after completing the recall task, participants were asked to write a paragraph describing the event in detail, including the cause of the event, motivations, and specific behaviors. When describing the event, they were asked to re-experience the experience as much as possible. After completing the task, participants were invited to fill out a questionnaire to assess their guilt and demographics.

### *3.2.3 Measures*

We used the same scales as in Study 1a to assess guilt (Cronbach's alpha was 0.923). Specifically, participants rated their current mood and their own individual characteristics.

### *3.2.4 Results of Manipulation Checks*

Like Study 1a, we used the 5-item scale developed by Chi et al. (2015) to examine the manipulation of service sabotage, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.961. In addition, we conducted a secondary manipulation test of retaliatory motivation for the two service sabotage groups, with participants using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to evaluate the item, "In the interaction just described, you deliberately took retaliatory service sabotage behaviors." The t-test results showed that the service sabotage group had a significantly higher service sabotage score than the control group ( $M_{\text{Yes}} = 5.191$ ,  $M_{\text{No}} = 2.344$ ,  $t(255) = 19.235$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, we further verified the effectiveness of the service sabotage type manipulation. The

t-test results showed that the retaliatory motivation score of the retaliatory service sabotage group was significantly higher than that of the non-retaliatory service sabotage group ( $M_1 = 5.01$ ,  $M_2 = 2.51$ ,  $t(169) = 10.894$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The above results show that our manipulation was successful.

### *3.2.5 Hypothesis Test*

To test Hypothesis 1, we verified Hypothesis 1 through ANOVA. The results showed that the group had a significant effect on employees' guilt ( $F(2, 254) = 138.329$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Participants in the non-retaliatory service sabotage group had higher guilt scores ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), which were significantly higher than those in the retaliatory service sabotage group ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the non-service sabotage group ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), providing support for Hypothesis 1.

### *3.2.6 Study 1b Discussion*

In this study, we manipulated service sabotage by asking participants to recall interpersonal interactions during past service processes. However, recall experiments are susceptible to memory bias. In addition, Studies 1a and 1b did not test the mediation hypothesis and the moderated mediation hypothesis. Therefore, we conducted a two-phase field study (Study 2) in eight hotels in China to verify our overall theoretical model and further test the external validity of this study in an organizational setting.

## **3.3 Study 2**

### *3.3.1 Samples and Research Design*

According to previous research (Zhao *et al.*, 2025), this study conducted a two-stage

research survey on front-line employees who can directly contact customers in eight East China hotels, including four three-star hotels, two four-star hotels, and two five-star hotels. The target employees are front-line employees who can directly contact customers. With the assistance of HR managers, a randomized selection process was conducted for front-line target employees according to job numbers, and we selected 50–70 employees from each hotel to participate in the research. This study invited 500 front-line hotel employees to participate in the questionnaire survey.

A sample match is ensured through numbering. This numbering scheme consists of the capital initials of the individual's full name coupled with the last four digits of their mobile phone number (such as CYH8680). In the first stage of the survey, 500 employees were invited to fill out a questionnaire on measuring demographics, service sabotage, guilt, and locus of control. A total of 426 valid questionnaires were obtained. After two weeks, 426 responding employees received the second-stage questionnaires. They were asked to report their customer-oriented OCB behaviors for all customers, and 415 questionnaires were received. After removing invalid questionnaires, a final sample of 395 questionnaires was retained, and the overall effective response rate was approximately 79%. Among the 395 valid questionnaires, 63.29% were females, and 36.71% were males. Employees aged 45 and below accounted for approximately 73.67%, and they were younger overall. Besides, 91.65% of employees have a college degree or below, and 44.05% have tenure in organizations between 1 and 6 years.

### *3.3.2 Measures*

The measurement scales (service sabotage, guilt, and locus of control) are the same as in

Study 1. Besides, we used the five-item scale developed by Pelled *et al.* (2000) to measure customer-oriented OCB for all customers in the subsequent service process. A sample item was “I always resolve customer problems immediately.” All variables were measured using a Likert seven-point scale (see Appendix B for details). Besides, following previous research on service sabotage and organizational citizenship behavior (Liu *et al.*, 2022; Ma *et al.*, 2021; Ye *et al.*, 2022), we regarded employees’ moral identity, gender, age, education level, and organizational tenure as control variables.

### 3.3.3 Results of Model Assessment

Drawing on the analytical strategies of previous scholars (Zhao *et al.*, 2024), first, we conducted a validity of the measurement model through SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results are presented in Table 2. All construct reliability (CR) values and Cronbach’s alpha exceed 0.7. Moreover, extracted average variance (AVE) values exceeded 0.5. These outcomes affirmed high internal consistency reliability and satisfactory convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2020). Table 2 demonstrates that the correlations of factors and all HTMT ratios are lower than the square root of AVE, suggesting the presence of discriminant validity in the model (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). As suggested by previous scholars, the value of standardized root mean residual (SRMR) is lower than 0.08 and the cross-validated redundancy ( $Q^2$ ) values exceed 0. The  $R^2$  of customer-oriented OCB and guilt are 0.219 and 0.123. The results show that the model with moderate explanatory and predictive power (Hair *et al.*, 2020).

Take in Table 2 Here

### 3.3.4 Common Method Bias Analysis

Using the methodology outlined by Podsakoff et al. (2012), this study further verified the problem of common method bias (CMV). The existing four-factor model incorporated an unmeasured latent variable (CMV). The model fit indices did not demonstrate significant improvement upon inclusion of the CMV factor ( $\chi^2 = 377.7$ ,  $df = 145$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.605$ , RMSEA = 0.063, IFI = 0.954, CFI = 0.954, TLI = 0.945) in comparison to the original four-factor model fit indices ( $\chi^2 = 397.2$ ,  $df = 146$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.721$ , RMSEA = 0.066, IFI = 0.950, CFI = 0.950, TLI = 0.941). Therefore, this study does not exhibit notable concerns regarding CMV.

### 3.3.5 Hypothesis test

The hypotheses were examined using Smartpls 3.0 software. The results are presented in Table 3. From Table 3, service sabotage was confirmed positively related to employees' guilt ( $\beta = 0.183$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, the evidence confirms Hypothesis 1. Moreover, guilt was significantly positively correlated with employee customer-oriented OCB ( $\beta = 0.498$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, guilt significantly mediated the effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB ( $\beta = 0.091$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, we inferred that Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Take in Table 3 Here

Regarding the moderating hypothesis, the findings in Table 3 indicated a significant positive impact of the interaction between service sabotage and locus of control on employee guilt ( $\beta = 0.083$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 gained empirical support. Furthermore, we plotted the simple slope of the interaction effect under the different levels of locus of control to explain the moderating effect better. The simple slope results in Figure 3 indicated that the positive impact of service sabotage on guilt was more significant when employees had an

internal locus of control. Collectively, the empirical findings provide support to Hypothesis 3. Consistent with the approach used in Study 1a, this study adopts the Johnson–Neyman technique to conduct a floodlight analysis (Krishna, 2016; Spiller *et al.*, 2013), following the practice of prior scholars (Banik and Rabbanee, 2023; Lin and Chou, 2022), to gain deeper insights into the moderating role of locus of control. Figure 4 presents the results of the Johnson–Neyman technique, indicating that the relationship between service sabotage and guilt becomes statistically significant when the locus of control exceeds a value of 2.8852.

Take in Figure 3 and Figure 4 Here

The findings to assess the validity of Hypothesis 4 are presented in Table 4. We found that the indirect effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB through guilt showed a significant positive relationship (Effect size = 0.1322, 95% bootstrap CIs = [0.0711, 0.1983], not including zero) when employees displayed an internal locus of control. Conversely, the indirect effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB via guilt was found to be non-significant (Effect size = -0.0034, 95% bootstrap CIs = [-0.1061, 0.0789], including zero) when employees had an external locus of control. Furthermore, the indirect effect of service sabotage on customer-oriented OCB via guilt had a significant difference under different levels of locus of control (Effect size = 0.0678, 95% bootstrap CIs = [0.0190, 0.1267], not including zero). In summary, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Take in Table 4 Here

### 3.3.6 Study 2 Discussion

The findings from Study 2 supported all hypotheses while constructively replicating Study

1a and 1b, further substantiating the theoretical propositions within the organizational domain. Combining the conclusions of Studies 1a(b) and 2 increases the robustness of our findings.

## **4. General Discussion**

### ***4.1 Discussion of Findings***

Due to the application of artificial intelligence and the pursuit of service quality, frontline service employees are experiencing higher levels of emotional labor and work stress. Therefore, service sabotage has become a common phenomenon in the service industry, and how to alleviate and deal with this negative behavior of employees has gradually become a topic of concern in the service industry. This study examines customer-oriented OCB as a compensatory behavior after employees engage in service sabotage, clarifying the emotional mechanisms and individual characteristic thresholds underlying this compensation process. Through two experimental studies and a questionnaire survey, this study confirms that employee engagement in service sabotage can also stimulate customer-oriented OCB in subsequent service engagements. Consistent with previous research findings, this study demonstrates the possibility of inconsistency in employee service behaviors (Liao *et al.*, 2018; Lowery *et al.*, 2021), provides theoretical support for organizations to respond to employee service failures in ongoing service situations, and reveals the positive consequences of effective responses to service-destructive behaviors. This result breaks through the traditional conclusion that service sabotage has negative consequences (Hu *et al.*, 2022; Lyu *et al.*, 2023) and also indirectly confirms the importance of organizations implementing service recovery (Chang, 2017). Based on this research conclusion, the future needs not only to curb the occurrence of

service sabotage at the source, but also to guide employees involved in service sabotage to actively adjust their behavior through various means and carry out post-governance.

This study also identifies differences between retaliatory and non-retaliatory service sabotage. Findings from critical incident recall suggest that employees experience guilt after engaging in non-retaliatory service sabotage, whereas retaliatory service sabotage does not elicit the same emotional response. This difference provides a new theoretical perspective for understanding employee service sabotage behaviors driven by different motivations, demonstrating that emotional responses are influenced not only by the nature of the behavior itself but also by the underlying psychological attributions and motivations. More broadly, this finding emphasizes that service sabotage is not a single negative behavior category, but a complex phenomenon with diverse motivations and varying emotional consequences. These results can be explained through the perspectives of restorative justice and negative reciprocity. Social exchange theory highlights not only positive reciprocity but also the presence of negative reciprocity in interpersonal interactions. Negative reciprocity operates on the principle of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” suggesting that when employees face exploitative leadership or perceive organizational injustice, they may engage in retaliatory actions to restore their internal sense of balance and achieve restorative justice (Finsterwalder and Tombs, 2021). This perspective not only enriches the explanation of negative reciprocity in social exchange theory but also provides a new entry point for interdisciplinary research into organizational injustice and employee coping mechanisms. Practically speaking, the revelation of this differentiated mechanism has important implications for organizations in developing targeted

management strategies. When addressing service sabotage, managers should adopt differentiated interventions based on the motivations behind the behavior.

Furthermore, based on moral compensation theory, this study also explored the mediating role of guilt in the relationship between service sabotage and customer-oriented OCB. The results provide empirical support for the research hypotheses. These findings suggest that guilt is a key trigger for employees to engage in moral compensation behaviors after exhibiting negative behaviors (Liao *et al.*, 2018), extending the generalizability of previous research findings in interpersonal interaction settings across organizations. This study identifies the moderating effect of locus of control. This finding deepens our understanding of the psychological and behavioral mechanisms of employee adjustment following unethical behavior. The results suggest that employees' moral self-image and their perception of the unethical nature of service sabotage are important prerequisites for activating compensatory behavior. This suggests that the generation and impact of moral emotions do not occur naturally but rather depend on individuals' moral evaluations of their behavior and how they attribute responsibility. Compared to individual traits such as moral identity, which reflect changes in individual moral attitudes, locus of control emphasizes individual moral attributions and moral reasoning (Black *et al.*, 2022; Guo *et al.*, 2021). This determines the stress that service sabotage behaviors exert on moral self-image, which in turn triggers varying degrees of guilt. The results of this study also provide a theoretical foundation and research direction for further exploring the individual differences in the mechanisms of service sabotage, focusing on the psychological changes and behavioral shifts of service sabotage actors from a moral perspective, thereby

further enriching theoretical research in the field of service management.

Finally, through in-depth interviews, this study also obtained some additional valuable conclusions, mainly including two aspects; First, the interviews further clarified that service sabotage can be categorized based on motivational factors into retaliatory and non-retaliatory service sabotage. Although retaliatory service sabotage was not the primary focus of this study, some employees reported that engaging in such behavior helped them alleviate psychological stress and negative emotions (Yue et al., 2020). This finding suggests that service sabotage is not a singular negative phenomenon but may be linked to individuals' psychological balance and need for restorative justice. This perspective provides direction for future research on service sabotage from a more complex motivational perspective and establishes a new intersection between emotion management and organizational justice research. Second, frontline service employees of different age groups exhibited distinct motivational patterns for engaging in service sabotage. For instance, in the work environment of adopting new technologies such as AI, younger employees often experience a reduced sense of responsibility due to their reliance on technology, leading to service sabotage. In contrast, older employees tend to engage in service sabotage as a response to the stress associated with technological changes. This generational difference not only deepens our understanding of the causes of service sabotage but also provides new research directions for future studies of employee service behavior in the context of technological change. It is necessary to integrate generational differences with the context of new technology applications, expanding the understanding of employee service behavior in organizational behavior.

## ***4.2 Theoretical Implication***

This study explores the consequences of service sabotage and has the following four theoretical implications for current theoretical research. First, this study applies the moral compensation theory to the field of service marketing for the first time, expanding the moral compensation theory from the traditional intra-organizational interpersonal interaction scenario to the interpersonal interaction scenario inside and outside the organization, thus expanding the universality of the moral compensation theory. This provides a new theoretical starting point for scholars to conduct subsequent research. Based on this result, future research can further explore the differences in the role of the moral compensation mechanism in different cultural backgrounds, industry types, and service models, so as to deepen the understanding of its universality and boundary conditions. In addition, this study further confirms the non-moral nature of service sabotage. Future scholars can continue this moral perspective, combine moral compensation theory with theories such as organizational fairness perception, and construct a more comprehensive explanatory framework to reveal the dynamic process of employees' behavioral repair in cross-organizational interactions.

In addition, this study further explores and refines the context in which the moral compensation mechanism is formed. Previous studies have shown that not all employees will exhibit moral compensation behavior after engaging in unethical behavior (Liao *et al.*, 2018; Pan *et al.*, 2023), this study innovatively starts from the behavioral motivation, clearly points out the close relationship between the intention behind the behavior and the activation of the moral compensation mechanism, revealing the context dependence of this mechanism, which

provides an important entry point for future academic exploration. Responding to the call of Lin *et al.* (2025), this study deepens the conceptual understanding of service sabotage (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002). Based on this result, scholars can systematically compare the differences in the probability of triggering moral compensation and compensation ways for service sabotage driven by different motivations in subsequent research, especially for non-retaliatory motivations, and explore their performance in different cultural environments, industry characteristics, and customer interaction models.

Second, this study is the first empirical study to examine the behavioral consequences of service sabotage on employees' own behavior from a perpetrator-centered perspective. The limited empirical studies have mostly focused on the antecedents of service sabotage and its impact on organizations, victims, and bystanders (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002; Hu *et al.*, 2020; Lyu *et al.*, 2023), while neglecting the dynamic changes in the perpetrators' own behavior. By specifically examining non-retaliatory service sabotage, this study highlights that service sabotage not only influences the negative psychological reactions of victims and bystanders but also extends its impact on the perpetrators themselves. Based on the findings of this study, further attention should be paid to the complex consequences of service sabotage, and future longitudinal follow-up research on the psychology and behavior of perpetrators should be expanded. This study provides new research ideas for in-depth research on the dynamics of service sabotage and reveals the importance of systematically exploring the multidimensional impact of service sabotage.

In addition, the conclusion of this study shows that when employees actively respond to

service sabotage, they can break the vicious cycle caused by service sabotage, which helps to improve the service quality of employees and form positive consequences in the short term, making up for the lack of research on how employees respond to service sabotage. This conclusion not only challenges the traditional theoretical view that “service sabotage is always harmful”, but also provides a new governance idea for service sabotage governance. Additionally, this study also provides an explanatory basis for the argument by Liu *et al.* (2022) in their meta-analysis, which suggests that service sabotage does not necessarily lead to a decline in subsequent work engagement.

Third, although existing studies have preliminarily revealed the psychological impact of service sabotage, most of them focus on the perspectives of others and cognitive processing (Hu *et al.*, 2020; Lyu *et al.*, 2023), ignoring the emotional experiences of service personnel themselves. This study explores guilt as an emotional explanation mechanism, representing a theoretical paradigm shift from cognitive explanation to emotional experience. Scholarship should further expand its emotional perspective and deepen its understanding of the internal psychological dynamics of service personnel, particularly the emotional regulation mechanisms during service failure recovery. Furthermore, researchers can explore how individual subjective initiative and moral cognitive construction intertwine to influence employee behavior, thereby promoting the internalization and stability of moral standards (Feng *et al.*, 2023).

Besides, emotion is an important perspective in service research (Lunardo and Saintives, 2017). While extensive studies on service sabotage have examined its formation through

various emotional states (Akhtar *et al.*, 2025; Lai *et al.*, 2020; Lyu *et al.*, 2024), but they mainly remain at the level of emotional valence (Liu *et al.*, 2022; Zhao and Han, 2025). This study helps scholars break away from the traditional framework of emotional valence, reveals the importance of the function of emotions in service research, and lays a theoretical foundation for further exploration of the differences in cognitive evaluation, moral connotations, and behavioral tendencies contained in specific emotion types in the future. Responding to the call by Lee and Johnson (2025), this study verifies the moral orientation and restorative function of guilt. This also provides a new research direction for scholars to explore the individual emotional mechanisms in service scenarios, which will help to improve the depth and accuracy of research on the social functions of emotions in the service field.

Finally, this study incorporates locus of control into the theoretical model, and innovatively verifies the boundary conditions of the service sabotage consequence mechanism from the perspective of individual characteristic factors. This study clarified the activation threshold of individual moral self-regulation, challenging the prevailing assumption that moral compensation only occurs among individuals with high moral sensitivity (Liao *et al.*, 2018; Pan *et al.*, 2023). Locus of control pertains to how individuals attribute responsibility for their actions and perceive personal accountability. Based on the research of Toti *et al.* (2021), the theoretical breakthrough of this study provides a new research direction for exploring the dynamic formation of the moral compensation process and provides a theoretical framework for scholars to combine individual attribution and moral compensation. The findings not only confirm that moral characteristics such as moral attitudes can activate moral compensation

mechanisms (Wang *et al.*, 2022; Zhang and Du, 2022), but also help promote the interdisciplinary integration of organizational behavior research and ethics research related to attribution and motivation.

### ***4.3 Practical Implications***

Service sabotage is widely regarded as a negative and unethical behavior that can cause significant harm to organizations (Lee and Ok, 2014). However, this study finds that employees who engage in service sabotage may later exhibit customer-oriented OCB in subsequent service interactions, ultimately improving service quality. This finding offers important implications for service management. First, while employees' engagement in customer-oriented OCB following service sabotage may enhance service quality, such behaviors require them to go beyond their formal job responsibilities, demanding additional effort and energy. This increased workload can disrupt their daily tasks, potentially leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction, which may hinder long-term career development (Koopman *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, to prevent these negative outcomes, organizations should focus on reducing service sabotage at its root. Drawing on insights from employee interviews, this study suggests that organizations should adopt different strategies for different types of service sabotage. For retaliatory service sabotage, organizations should enhance employees' perceptions of fairness and organizational support. Initiatives such as implementing a "Manager Reception Day" to regularly address frontline employees' concerns or providing compensatory pay for employees mistreated by customers can help mitigate the underlying causes of retaliatory service sabotage. For non-retaliatory service sabotage, organizations should focus on reducing employees' work-

related stress and increasing their autonomy in service delivery. Strategies such as resilience training through service failure case sharing can equip employees with the skills needed to manage workplace challenges more effectively. By implementing targeted interventions, organizations can create a work environment that minimizes service sabotage while promoting employee well-being and sustainable service excellence.

Second, this study finds that service sabotage damages employees' moral self-image, triggering feelings of guilt that subsequently lead them to engage in customer-oriented OCB. This finding underscores the critical role of moral self-image in shaping employees' guilt-driven behavioral responses. It highlights the need for organizations and managers to help employees recognize the unethical nature of service sabotage and to reinforce the significance of moral self-image in their self-concept (Zhao and Ma, 2025). Organizations can strengthen employees' moral self-image awareness through mechanisms such as customer feedback systems, peer evaluations, and ethical leadership role modeling. Additionally, managers should acknowledge the potential positive effects of service sabotage and provide appropriate guidance for employees engaging in non-retaliatory service sabotage. Strategies such as enhancing employees' empathy training and fostering a stronger sense of organizational identification can help redirect their behaviors toward constructive service practices.

Finally, the results show that it is not only employees with extreme internal control who can produce moral compensation reactions. Employees with a medium to high level of locus of control may also feel guilty about service sabotage behaviors, thereby stimulating compensation motivation. This finding greatly enhances the feasibility and universality of

ethical management interventions. Specifically, organizations can extend intervention measures such as ethics training and employee psychological responsibility awareness to a wider range of employee groups. For example, attribution reconstruction interventions can be carried out to help employees more accurately identify the impact of their own behavior on others and enhance their sense of responsibility attribution.

#### ***4.4 Limitations and Future Directions***

This research still has certain limitations. First, a two-stage survey approach is limited in verifying causal relationships among variables. Therefore, future research should conduct three-stage investigations to substantiate the causal relationships between the variables. Although the authors have tried their best to ensure the validity of the experimental results through program design and cross-validation, it is still difficult to avoid the limitations of experimental design. Therefore, the conclusions of this study can be further replicated through laboratory experiments and ESM (experience sampling method) in the future.

Second, the questionnaire was administered based on employee self-reporting, which may introduce challenges of potential common method variance and social desirability bias. Future research can employ diverse data collection methods to address this concern, such as leaders reporting employees' service sabotage and customer-oriented OCB and employees reporting their guilt and locus of control.

Lastly, we posit that future research can delve deeper into the following aspects for enhanced exploration and understanding. The first is the study of the differentiation of service sabotage types. While this study categorizes service sabotage into two types, it primarily

focuses on non-retaliatory service sabotage. However, interview findings suggest that retaliatory service sabotage may help employees alleviate negative emotions. Future research should further explore the differential consequences of retaliatory versus non-retaliatory service sabotage. The second is the outcome variable of service sabotage. This study investigates the impact of service sabotage on employees' positive behaviors. Future research could explore how retaliatory and non-retaliatory service sabotage influence employees' negative behaviors, such as turnover intentions. The third is the mediating mechanism of the relationship between service sabotage and actors' subsequent behavior. Employees' negative behavior damages the organization's interests and reduces the leadership's evaluation. Such behaviors cause anxiety and prompt employees to have more proactive behaviors for impression management (Huang et al., 2013). Future studies could adopt an impression management perspective to examine the underlying mechanisms through which service sabotage shapes employee behavior. Additionally, this study highlights the explanatory role of moral self-image. Future research could further investigate the interaction between cognitive mechanisms (e.g. self-image and moral credit) and moral emotion mechanisms (e.g. guilt). The fourth is moderating variables. Future studies may focus on organizational factors, such as the ethical climate. This variable can be a potential moderator in the relationship between service sabotage and customer-oriented OCB. In addition, given that our study focuses on the consequences of non-retaliatory service sabotage as a form of unethical behavior, moral compensation theory provides a more suitable framework. However, future research could explore whether customer-oriented OCB might trigger employees' moral licensing, potentially

leading to service sabotage. Fifth, employees' moral compensation behaviors not only reflect individual psychological adjustment mechanisms but can also generate an "aggregation effect" within the organization, further influencing organizational climate and ethical norms. In other words, individual differences in locus of control can gradually influence the overall ethical climate of the organization through compensatory behaviors. Future research needs to further explore the transformation mechanisms between micro-psychological mechanisms and macro-organizational ethics in the service sector.

## Reference:

- Akhtar, M. W., Karatepe, O. M., Syed, F., Usman, M. and Aslam, M. K. (2025), "Fire with smoke: Exploitative leadership, anxiety, and service sabotage in the hotel industry", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 126. Art. 104097.
- Aquino, K. and Reed, A. (2002), "The self-importance of moral identity", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 6, pp. 1423-1440.
- Aquino, K. and Reed, A. (2002), "The self-importance of moral identity", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 6, pp. 1423-1440.
- Banik, S. and Rabbane, F. K. (2023), "Does status demotion in hierarchical loyalty programs foster relationship fading?", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 8, pp. 1087-1102.
- Black, E. L., Burton, F. G. and Cieslewicz, J. K. (2022), "Improving ethics: Extending the theory of planned behavior to include moral disengagement", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 181 No. 4, pp. 945-978.
- Bonner, J. M., Greenbaum, R. L. and Quade, M. J. (2017), "Employee unethical behavior to shame as an indicator of self-image threat and exemplification as a form of self-image protection: The exacerbating role of supervisor bottom-line mentality", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 102 No. 8, pp. 1203-1221.
- Brislin, R. W. (1970), "Back-translation for cross-cultural research", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 185-216.
- Burmeister, A., Fasbender, U. and Gerpott, F. H. (2019), "Consequences of knowledge hiding:

- The differential compensatory effects of guilt and shame”, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 92 No. 2, pp. 281-304.
- Chang, J.-H. (2017), “The role of relationship on time and monetary compensation”. *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 15-16, pp. 919-935.
- Chen, M., Chen, C. C. and Schminke, M. (2023), “Feeling guilty and entitled: Paradoxical consequences of unethical pro-organizational behavior”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 183 No. 3, pp. 865-883.
- Cheng, B., Guo, G., Tian, J. and Shaalan, A. (2020), “Customer incivility and service sabotage in the hotel industry”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32 No. 5, pp. 1737-1754
- Chi, N.-W., Chang, H.-T. and Huang, H.-L. (2015), “Can personality traits and daily positive mood buffer the harmful effects of daily negative mood on task performance and service sabotage? A self-control perspective”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 131, pp. 1-15.
- Dadaboyev, S. M. U., Baek, Y. and Paek, S. (2023), “Workplace deviance, emotional state and reparative behaviors: task visibility as a boundary condition in a mediated moderation model”, *Baltic Journal of Management*, Vol. 18 No. 5, pp. 596-611.
- Detert, J. R., Trevino, L. K. and Sweitzer, V. L. (2008), “Moral disengagement in ethical decision making: a study of antecedents and outcomes”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 2, pp. 374-391.
- Du, J., Fan, X. and Feng, T. (2014), “Group Emotional Contagion and Complaint Intentions in

- Group Service Failure”, *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 326-338.
- Feinberg, M., Ford, B. Q. and Flynn, F. J. (2020), “Rethinking reappraisal: The double-edged sword of regulating negative emotions in the workplace”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 161, pp. 1-19.
- Feng, Z., Keng-Highberger, F., Li, H., & Savani, K. (2023), “Implicit morality theories: Employees’ beliefs about the malleability of moral character shape their workplace behaviors”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 184 No. 1, pp. 193-216.
- Finsterwalder, J. and Tombs, A. G. (2021), “Infusing tribal reciprocity into service research: towards an integrated and dynamic view of repayment, retaliation and restorative justice for regenerative service ecosystem wellbeing”, *Service Business*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 563-586.
- Forte, A. (2005), “Locus of control and the moral reasoning of managers”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 65-77.
- Gino, F. and Margolis, J. D. (2011), “Bringing ethics into focus: How regulatory focus and risk preferences influence (Un)ethical behavior”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 115 No. 2, pp. 145-156.
- Gip, H., Guchait, P., Paşamehmetoğlu, A. and Khoa, D. T. (2022), “How organizational dehumanization impacts hospitality employees service recovery performance and sabotage behaviors: the role of psychological well-being and tenure”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 64-91.

- Greenbaum, R., Bonner, J., Gray, T. and Mawritz, M. (2020), "Moral emotions: A review and research agenda for management scholarship", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 95-114.
- Guan, B., Li, X., Luo, Z. and Liu, P. (2024), "Can (A)I arouse you? The impact of AI services on consumer pro-environmental behavior", *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*.
- Guo, Q., Guo, Y., Qiao, X., Leng, J. and Lv, Y. (2021), "Chance locus of control predicts moral disengagement which decreases well-being", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 171, pp. 110489.
- Haidt, J. (2003). The moral emotions. In R. J. Davison, K. R. Scherer & H. H. Goldsmith (Eds.), *Handbook of affective sciences* (Vol. 11, pp. 852-870). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hair, J. F., Howard, M. C. and Nitzl, C. (2020), "Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 109, pp. 101-110.
- Harris, L. C. and Ogbonna, E. (2002), "Exploring service sabotage: The antecedents, types and consequences of frontline, deviant, antiservice behaviors", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 163-183.
- Harris, L. C. and Ogbonna, E. (2009), "Service sabotage: The dark side of service dynamics", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 325-335.

- He, P., Wang, J., Zhou, H., Liu, Q. and Zada, M. (2023), "How and when perpetrators reflect on and respond to their workplace ostracism behavior: A moral cleansing lens", *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, Vol. 16, pp. 683-700.
- Heng, Y. T. and Fehr, R. (2022), "When you try your best to help but don't succeed: How self-compassionate reflection influences reactions to interpersonal helping failures", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 171, pp. 104151.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M. and Sarstedt, M. (2015), "A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 43 No. 41, pp. 115-135.
- Hongbo, L., Waqas, M., Tariq, H., Nana Abena, A. A., Akwasi, O. C. and Ashraf, S. F. (2020), "I will hurt you for this, when and how subordinates take revenge from abusive supervisors: a perspective of displaced revenge", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 11, pp. 503153.
- Hu, H.-H. H. S., Lai, H.-S. H. and King, B. (2020), "Restaurant employee service sabotage and customer deviant behaviors: The moderating role of corporate reputation", *Journal Of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 1126-1152.
- Huang, G.-h., Zhao, H. H., Niu, X.-y., Ashford, S. J. and Lee, C. (2013), "Reducing Job Insecurity and Increasing Performance Ratings: Does Impression Management Matter?", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 98 No. 5, pp. 852-862.
- Huang, Y.-S., Greenbaum, R. L., Bonner, J. M. and Wang, C. S. (2019), "Why sabotage customers who mistreat you? Activated hostility and subsequent devaluation of targets

- as a moral disengagement mechanism”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 104 No. 4, pp. 495-510.
- Huang, Y.-S., Greenbaum, R. L., Bonner, J. M. and Wang, C. S. (2019), “Why sabotage customers who mistreat you? Activated hostility and subsequent devaluation of targets as a moral disengagement mechanism”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 104 No. 4, pp. 495-510.
- Husser, J., Andre, J.-M. and Lespinet-Najib, V. (2017), “The impact of locus of control, moral intensity, and the microsocial ethical environment on purchasing-related ethical reasoning”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 154 No. 1, pp. 243-261.
- Jennings, P. L., Mitchell, M. S. and Hannah, S. T. (2015), “The moral self: A review and integration of the literature”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 36 No. S1, pp. S104-S168.
- Jiang, W., Shum, C., Min, H. and Ding, Y. (2023), “How observed customer mistreatment of supervisors affects employees’ service sabotage: A cross-cultural examination from the deontic justice theory”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 110, pp. 103452.
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Erez, A. and Locke, E. A. (2005), “Core Self-Evaluations and Job and Life Satisfaction: The Role of Self-Concordance and Goal Attainment”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 90 No. 2, pp. 257-268.

- Kenar, G. and Yeşiltaş, M. (2024), “Service-oriented high performance human resource practices and proactive work behavior: A moderated mediation model”, *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 3-4, No. 237-264.
- Kim, J. K., Holtz, B. C. and Hu, B. (2020), “Rising above: Investigating employee exemplification as a response to the experience of shame induced by abusive supervision”, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 4, pp. 861-886.
- Koopman, J., Lanaj, K. and Scott, B. A. (2016), “Integrating the bright and dark sides of OCB: A daily investigation of the benefits and costs of helping others”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 59 No. 2, pp. 414-435.
- Krishna, A. (2016), “A clearer spotlight on spotlight: Understanding, conducting and reporting”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 315-324.
- Lai, M.-Y., Sun, L.-H. and Chu, H.-L. (2020), “Emotional labor and service sabotage in the hospitality industry: The mediating role of emotional exhaustion”, *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 120-132.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation*: Oxford University Press.
- Le, V. H., Nguyen, H. T. T., Nguyen, N. and Pervan, S. (2020), “Development and validation of a scale measuring hotel website service quality (HWebSQ)”, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 35, pp. 100697.
- Lee, J. and Ok, C. M. (2014), “Understanding hotel employees’ service sabotage: Emotional labor perspective based on conservation of resources theory”, *International Journal of*

*Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36, pp. 176-187.

Lee, K. and Gong, T. (2024), “How customer incivility affects organization citizenship behavior: roles of depersonalization, resilience, and caring climate”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 252-271.

Lee, S. H. and Johnson, M. D. (2025), “Emotional signaling: How helpers’ emotional expressions affect attributions of motives, relationship quality, and reciprocation”, *Academy of Management Journal*.

Levenson, H. (1981), “Differentiating among internality, powerful others, and chance”, In Lefcourt, H. M. (Ed.), *Research with the Locus of Control Construct* (pp. 15-63). New York: Academic Press.

Li, S., Jia, R., Seufert, J. H., Luo, J. and Sun, R. (2023), “You may not reap what you sow: How and when ethical leadership promotes subordinates’ online helping behavior”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 1683-1702.

Liang, S.-G. (2022), “I just don’t want to lose face: A self-image reparative response framework of how and when abused subordinates improve their performance”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 1461-1480.

Liao, Z., Yam, K. C., Johnson, R. E., Liu, W. and Song, Z. (2018), “Cleansing my abuse: A reparative response model of perpetrating abusive supervisor behavior”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 103 No. 9, pp. 1039–1056.

Liao, Z., Yam, K. C., Lee, H. W., Johnson, R. E. and Tang, P. M. (2024), “Cleansing or licensing? Corporate social responsibility reconciles the competing effects of unethical pro-

- organizational behavior on moral self-regulation” *Journal of Management*, Vol. 50 Vol. 5, pp. 1643-1683.
- Lin, C.-Y. and Chou, E.-Y. (2022), “Investigating the role of customer forgiveness following a double deviation”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 36 No. 8, pp. 1042-1057.
- Lin, D., Shi, Z., Kim, H. and Qu, H. (2022), “Customer verbal aggression and employee service sabotage: The mediating role of perceived discrimination”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 107.
- Lin, S.-H., Poulton, E. C. and Johnson, R. E. (2025), “Short-term fulfillment: How supervisors’ motives for abusive behaviors influence need satisfaction and daily outcomes”, *Journal of Management*.
- Liu, C., Hou, Y., Gu, R. and Cai, Y. (2025), “A dynamic theoretical model based on compensatory ethics: How religious belief shapes tourists’ pro-environmental behavior”, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*.
- Liu, M., Zhang, P., Gui, C., Lei, C. and Ji, X. (2022), “Service sabotage in hospitality: A meta-analytic review”, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, Vol. 31 No. 8, pp. 984-1008.
- Liu, M., Zhang, P., Gui, C., Lei, C. and Ji, X. (2022), “Service sabotage in hospitality: A meta-analytic review”, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, Vol. 31 No. 8, pp. 984-1008.
- Lowery, M. R., Clark, M. A. and Carter, N. T. (2021), “The balancing act of performance: Psychometric networks and the causal interplay of organizational citizenship and

- counterproductive work behaviors”, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 125, pp. 103527.
- Lunardo, R. and Saintives, C. (2017), “Coping with the ambivalent emotions of guilt and pride in the service context”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 360-370.
- Lyu, Y., Wu, L.-Z., Ye, Y. and Fan, Y. (2024), “Do you feel angry when you are gossiped about? Understanding the mechanism underlying negative workplace gossip and service sabotage”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 122.
- Lyu, Y., Zhu, H., Huang, E. G. and Chen, Y. (2023), “The black sheep in hospitality organizations: how and when coworker service sabotage hinders employee service creativity”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. (In Press)
- Ma, C. and Ye, J. (2022), “Linking artificial intelligence to service sabotage”, *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 42 No. 13-14, pp. 1054-1074.
- Ma, J., Zhou, X. and Mu, Z. (2021), “Can abusive supervision motivate customer-oriented service sabotage? A multilevel research”, *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 9-10, pp. 696-717.
- Mulki, J. and Lassk, F. G. (2019), “Joint impact of ethical climate and external work locus of control on job meaningfulness”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 99, pp. 46-56.
- Mullen, E. and Monin, B. (2016), “Consistency versus licensing effects of past moral behavior”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 67 No. 1, pp. 363-385.
- Murk, D. A. and Addleman, J. A. (1992), “Relations among moral reasoning, locus of control, and demographic variables among college students “, *Psychological Reports*, Vol. 70

No. 2, pp. 467-476.

Ni, D., Liu, X. and Zheng, X. (2024), “Render good for evil? The relationship between customer mistreatment and customer-oriented citizenship behavior”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 170.

Ogunfowora, B., Nguyen, V. Q., Lee, C. S., Babalola, M. T. and Ren, S. (2023), “Do moral disengagers experience guilt following workplace misconduct? Consequences for emotional exhaustion and task performance”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 476-494.

Pan, W., Lua, E., Yang, Z. and Su, Y. (2023), “When and How Knowledge Hiding Motivates Perpetrators' Organizational Citizenship Behavior”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 193 No. 2, pp. 325-344.

Park, J. and Kim, H. J. (2019), “How and when does abusive supervision affect hospitality employees' service sabotage?”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 83, pp. 190-197.

Patterson, A., Harris, L. and Baron, S. (2010), “Deviant employees and dreadful service encounters: customer tales of discord and distrust”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 24 No. 6, pp. 438-445.

Pelled, L. H., Cummings, T. G. and Kizilos, M. A. (2000), “The influence of organizational demography on customer-oriented prosocial behavior: An exploratory investigation”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 209-216.

Peng, P., Jacobs, S. and Cambré, B. (2022), “How to create more customer value in independent

- shops: A set-theoretic approach to value creation", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 146, pp. 241-250.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B. and Podsakoff, N. P. (2012), "Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it", *The Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 63, pp. 539-569.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y. and Podsakoff, N. P. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903.
- Rotter, J. B. (1966), "Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement", *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 1-28.
- Shockley, K. M., Gabriel, A. S. and Yuan, Z. (2022), "Profiles of attribution for work–family conflict episodes and their relation to negative emotions", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 643-661.
- Spiller, S. A., Fitzsimons, G. J., John G. Lynch, J. and McClelland, G. H. (2013), "Spotlights, floodlights, and the magic number zero: Simple effects tests in moderated regression", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 277-288.
- Su, L., Jia, B. and Huang, Y. (2022), "How do destination negative events trigger tourists' perceived betrayal and boycott? The moderating role of relationship quality", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 92, pp. 104536.
- Szilagyi Jr., A. D., Sims Jr., H. P. and Keller, R. T. (1976), "Role dynamics, locus of control,

- and employee attitudes and behavior”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 259-276.
- Tang, P. M., Yam, K. C. and Koopman, J. (2020), “Feeling proud but guilty? Unpacking the paradoxical nature of unethical pro-organizational behavior”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 160, pp. 68-86.
- Tang, P. M., Yam, K. C., Koopman, J. and Ilies, R. (2022), “Admired and disgusted? Third parties' paradoxical emotional reactions and behavioral consequences towards others' unethical pro-organizational behavior”, *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 33-67.
- Tangney, J. P., Miller, R. S., Flicker, L. and Barlow, D. H. (1996), “Are shame, guilt, and embarrassment distinct emotions?”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 70 No. 6, pp. 1256-1269.
- Toti, J.-F., Diallo, M. F. and Huaman-Ramirez, R. (2021), “Ethical sensitivity in consumers' decision-making: The mediating and moderating role of internal locus of control”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 131, pp. 168-182.
- Valentine, S. R., Hanson, S. K. and Fleischman, G. M. (2018), “The presence of ethics codes and employees' internal locus of control, social aversion/malevolence, and ethical judgment of incivility: A study of smaller organizations”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 160 No. 3, pp. 657-674.
- Wang, C.-J. (2023), “Influence of social identity on service sabotage in hospitality organizations: cross-level roles of job embeddedness, organizational identification and

- supervisor support”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36 No. 6, pp. 1868-1892.
- Wang, I. A., Chen, P.-C. and Chi, N.-W. (2023), “Mitigating immediate and lagged effects of customer mistreatment on service failure and sabotage: Critical roles of service recovery behaviors”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 154.
- Wang, M., Liao, H., Zhan, Y. and Shi, J. (2011), “Daily customer mistreatment and employee sabotage against customers: Examining emotion and resource perspectives”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 312-334.
- Wang, X., Guchait, P., Khoa, D. T., Paşamehmetoğlu, A. and Wen, X. (2022), “Hospitality employees’ affective experience of shame, self-efficacy beliefs and job behaviors: The alleviating role of error tolerance”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 102, pp. 103162.
- Wang, Z. and Jiang, F. (2023), “It is not only what you do, but why you do it: The role of attribution in employees' emotional and behavioral responses to illegitimate tasks”, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 142, pp. 103860.
- Wang, Y., Xiao, S. and Ren, R. (2022), “A moral cleansing process: How and when does unethical pro-organizational behavior increase prohibitive and promotive voice”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 176 No. 1, pp. 175-193.
- Xie, Y., Xia, Q., Song, J., Hu, S. and Liu, X. (2024), “How ethical leadership influences knowledge hiding? A sequential mediation model”, *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 3-4, pp. 265-287.

- Xu, X. a., Liu, J. and Cai, R. (2022), “How do customers navigate perceived inappropriateness of collective emotion in group service recovery? An application of cognitive dissonance theory”, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 93, pp. 104615.
- Ye, Y., Lyu, Y., Wu, L.-Z. and Kwan, H. K. (2022), “Exploitative leadership and service sabotage”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 95, pp. 103444.
- Yuan, Z., Barnes, C. M. and Li, Y. (2018), “Bad behavior keeps you up at night: Counterproductive work behaviors and insomnia”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 103 No. 4, pp. 383-398.
- Yue, Y., Nguyen, H., Groth, M., Johnson, A. and Frenkel, S. (2020), “When Heroes and Villains Are Victims: How Different Withdrawal Strategies Moderate the Depleting Effects of Customer Incivility on Frontline Employees”, *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 435-454.
- Yum, K. K., Choi, J. O. and Hyun, S. S. (2024), “A study on the effect of job stress factors on mental health and service sabotage: Focusing on flight attendants in foreign airlines”, *Journal of Air Transport Management*, Vol. 115.
- Zhao, H., Chen, Y., Zhao, S. and Wang, B. (2024), “Green inclusive leadership and hospitality employees’ green service innovative behavior in the Chinese hospitality context: The roles of basic psychological needs and employee traditionality”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 123, pp. 103922.
- Zhang, Y. and Du, S. (2022), “Moral cleansing or moral licensing? A study of unethical pro-organizational behavior’s differentiating effects”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*.

- Zhao, H., Ma, Y. and Chen, Y. (2025), "Facing or avoiding? How dependence on artificial intelligence influences hotel employees' job crafting", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 1884-1902.
- Zhao, J. and Han, M. (2025), "The relationship between illegitimate tasks and service sabotage: an investigation of emotional energy and psychological resilience", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 37 No. 7, pp. 2408-2424.
- Zhao, H. and Ma, Y. (2025), "How is it going to end? Negative workplace gossip about coworkers, compensatory ethics and gossipers helping behavior toward coworkers", *Personnel Review*.
- Zhong, C.-B. and Liljenquist, K. (2006), "Washing away your sins: Threatened morality and physical cleansing", *Science*, Vol. 313 No. 5792, pp. 1451-1452.
- Zhong, C.-B., Ku, G., Robert B. Lount, J. and Murnighan, J. K. (2010), "Compensatory Ethics", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 92 No. 3, pp. 323-339.
- Zhong, R. and Robinson, S. L. (2020), "What happens to bad actors in organizations? A review of actor-centric outcomes of negative behavior", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 47 No. 6, pp. 1430-1467.
- Zulfiqar, S., Garavan, T., Huo, C., Akhtar, M. W. and Sarwar, B. (2023), "Leaders' knowledge hiding and front-line employee service sabotage", *The Service Industries Journal*. (In Press)