

# Customer Complaint Behavior (CCB) in the Hotel Industry- A Perspective of Chennai Customers

Dr.S. Arulkumar and Dr.M. Krithika

**Abstract---** *Complaint behavior of the customers can be well-defined as an expression of an unfavorable behavioral attitude towards a product, individual, or circumstance (Johnston and Michel, 2008). Consumer complaint behavior (CCB) in marketing is frequently observed either as a fixed activity or as a powerful change process. This subject is still under discussion. According to study by Malhotra, Naresh K., et al., (2008), a service renovation of consumers, will increase loyalty and obtain constructive feedback. The primary purposes of this research paper are to identify the extent of influence of the level of dissatisfaction. The study population consisted of customers visiting hotels located in Chennai to find the answer to the goals. Chennai hotels have been selected based on membership hotels listed under the Chennai branch of the South Indian hotel association. The respondents were selected based on a sampling methodology for non-probability convenience. The questionnaire was to analyze respondents' complaining of conduct. To measure the behavior of the customers, a structured questionnaire developed by Joseph Tong and Jamie Carlson (2012), Blodgett et al., (1993), Richins (1980), Malhotra, Naresh K., et al., (2008) used. It consists of 31 statements calculated on a five-point Likert scale, with 5 suggesting strong agreement and one strong disagreement. Before check-in or after check-out, the respondents asked to fill out the questionnaires. About 500 questionnaires were circulated from August to November 2019 and received personally. Of these, the study contained 389 surveys. Consequently, the response rate was 77 percent out of the original 500 surveys. For data analysis, SPSS 20.0 was used to obtain the results. Multiple regression used to find out the extent of influence of the variables taken for the study. The results show that all variables significantly influence the CCB experience. The findings, suggestions addressed here can substantially assist the researchers in understanding how consumers take complain of action in case of dissatisfied service.*

**Keywords---** *Complaining Behavior, Public Complain, Defection, Level of Dissatisfaction, Perceived the Possibility of Success, Attitude towards Complaining, Complain Intention.*

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

Complaint behavior defined as “an outcome of an unfavorable behavioral attitude towards an object, person, or circumstance” (Johnston and Michel, 2008; Rahman et al., 2015; Komunda 2013). Customer complaint behavior (CCB) has often been used either as frequently observed either as a fixed activity or as a powerful change process. This subject area is still under innovation. A complaint gives an opportunity to educate the customer, support loyalty and to give positive comments (Rahman et al., 2015). Successful organizations encourage complaints from customers (Tronvoll, 2012; Komunda 2013), because all organisations experience some level of customer dissatisfaction (Ndibusu and Ling, 2006; Komunda 2013; Rahman et al., 2015), it is essential to research customers'

---

Dr.S. Arulkumar, Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, DDE, Annamalai University, Chidambaram.  
E-mail: arulmba123@gmail.com

Dr.M. Krithika, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Saveetha School of Engineering, SIMATS, Chennai.  
E-mail: krithikam.sse@saveetha.com

post-dissatisfaction behavior. The research conducted by Casado, Nicolau, and Mas 2011; Komunda 2013 suggest that the concept of customer complaint (CCB) is a complex phenomenon. The difficulty in CCB is expressed in the number of proposed alternative taxonomies, terminology and definitions to describe this behavior (Komunda 2013). (Tronvoll 2007; Komunda 2013) adds that customer complaints exacerbated by higher control of information and poorer relations between the user and the service provider. Management, therefore, needs to develop strategies for the problem of decreased customer lifetime value and behavioral intentions (Tronvoll, 2007; Komunda 2013).

Complaint activity in terms of customer service is not well controlled (Heung and Lam, 2003; Kim et al., 2003; Ndibusi and Ling, 2006; Komunda 2013). Feedback and intervention are needed to reduce their negative impact. Today, marketers are looking for information about consumer behavior and how to handle customer complaints based on the above. Customer information and feedback recognized as essential factors in producing a positive outcome in advertising (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2003; Komunda 2013). Sadly, most consumers do not complain about disappointment with service failure but leave (Tax et al., 1998; Komunda 2013). Organizations, therefore, need to consider how consumers respond to service failure and recovery efforts by providers.

According to (Singh 1988; Rahman et al., 2015), CCB is a negative reaction which are caused by perceived level of frustration with a purchase event. The CCB concept was previously defined by (Jacoby and Jaccard 1981; Rahman et al., 2015) is an action taken by an individual involving communicating the negative things about a product or service. In other words complaining by happy customers is considered outside the context of customer complaints (Singh, 1988). Traditionally, frustration has defined as the growing determinant of complaining behavior. The disparity between planned and achieved performance results in customer dissatisfaction (Ndibusi and Ling, 2006 ; Komunda 2013). Disapproval is happened by actual experience is less than expected customer experience (Oliver, 1980). Negative disconfirmation occurs when the performance of the service is not consistent with previous expectations.

Current CCB studies have shown that only developed countries are available in large numbers of education and that Indian customers are more reactive in communicating disappointment with hotel services. Very little amount of research studying complaint behavior in Chennai is available.

With a correct perceptive of consumer complaint trends and the determinants, helps to receive constructive feedback and identify potential service problems. Therefore, the behavior of consumer complaints in the hotel industry needs to explore. Based on such a report, the hotel business can better know the consumer's concerns and able to offer better serve in growing market.

### ***Objectives***

The following objectives were formulated based on above discussion

- To assess the effect of the degree of dissatisfaction with service, perceived the possibility of success, attitude to complain, complaint intention on the public complaint, private complaint, defection of respondents.
- To understand the preferred way to complain in the hotel industry.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study population of the sample consisted of customers visiting hotels in Chennai. The choice of Chennai hotels was based on membership hotels listed under the South Indian hotel association's Chennai division. The respondents for the study were selected based on convenience sampling technique. The study instrument was designed to examine the complaining behavior of the respondents. To measure the action does not appear to be modifying the subject a structured questionnaire developed by Joseph Tong and Jamie Carlson (2012), Blodgett et al., (1993), Richins (1980), Malhotra, Naresh K., et al., (2008). To measure the behavior, a structured questionnaire developed by Joseph Tong and Jamie Carlson (2012), Blodgett et al., (1993), Richins (1980), Malhotra, Naresh K. et al., (2008) used. It consists of 31 statements calculated on a five-point Likert scale, with 5 suggesting strong agreement and one strong disagreement. Before check-in or on after check-out, the respondents were requested to fill survey template. From August to November 2019, a total of 500 questionnaires were circulated and received by interview method. Of these, the study contained 389 surveys. Consequently, the response rate was 77 percent of the original 500 surveys. To determine the extent of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable multiple subject regression were applied.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1: Effect of Level of Dissatisfaction with Service, Perceived the Possibility of Success, Attitude toward Complain and Complain Intention on Public Complain of Respondents

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>F-Value</i>	<i>P-Value</i>
.642 <sup>a</sup>	.412	67.279	.000 <sup>b</sup>

Source: Primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

Table 4.2: ANOVA Table

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
1 (Constant)	.822	.165		4.970	.000
Level of Dissatisfaction with service	.110	.042	.135	2.642	.009
Perceived Possibility of Success	.174	.043	.190	4.059	.000
Attitude Towards complain	.293	.056	.282	5.262	.000
Complain Intention	.190	.046	.198	4.085	.000

Source: Primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

To test the influence of the level of dissatisfaction with service, the perceived possibility of success and attitude toward complain and complain intention, on public complain regression is applied.

From the table of ANOVA, the value of the R square was.412. Independent variables clarify 41 percent of the variability in Public complaints. It is found that the value of 'F' is important at 0.001. Thus there is an effect of independent variables, namely the rate of dissatisfaction with service, perceived possibility of success and attitude towards complaining and complaining intention on a dependent variable complaint from the public.

From the results is observed that attitude toward complaints (.293) is found to be the most significant related factor affecting the public complain. Complain intention is the second important factor followed by, the perceived possibility of success and level of dissatisfaction with service, so attitude toward complain and controllability had a

notable influence on the public complain. Attitude toward complains highly influences the high and level of dissatisfaction influences the least. The Public complains to respondents is expressed by the equation.

$Y$  (Public complain) = .822+ + (.110) Level of dissatisfaction with service (.174) Perceived possibility of success + (.293) Attitude toward complain + (.190) Complain intention + Standard error. From the equation it is observed that to have a one-unit increase in the level of dissatisfaction with service, the Perceived possibility of success, Attitude toward complain and Complain intention the public complain increased by .110, .174, .293,.190, while the other factors remain constant.

Table 4.3: Effect of Level of Dissatisfaction with Service and Perceived Possibility of Success, Attitude toward Complain and Complain Intention on Private Complain of Respondents

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>F value</i>	<i>P value</i>
.583 <sup>a</sup>	.340	49.435	.000*

Source: Primary data computed

Table 4.4: ANOVA Table

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t - value</i>	<i>P - value</i>
1 (Constant)	.666	.210		3.172	.002*
Level of Dissatisfaction with service	-.069	.053	-.070	-1.295	.196**
Perceived Possibility of Success	.229	.054	.209	4.203	.000*
Attitude Towards complain	.422	.071	.340	5.980	.000*
Complain Intention	.245	.059	.214	4.161	.000*

Source: primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

To test the influence of level of dissatisfaction with service, perceived the possibility of success, attitude toward complain and complain intention, on private complain regression analysis applied.

The R square value was .333 from the ANOVA table it suggests that 33% of the variation in private complaints is interpreted by independent variables. The value of 'F' found to be significant at the 0.001 level. So, there is an influence of independent variables namely level of dissatisfaction with service, perceived the possibility of success, attitude toward complaining and complain intention, on a dependent variable private complaint. The hypothesis is therefore rejected at a level of one percent.

From the results is noted that the Attitude toward complaints (.340) is first important factor affecting the private complain. Complain intention is the second essential factor the perceived possibility of success and level of dissatisfaction with service are the next essential factor. So attitude toward complains and Level of dissatisfaction with service had a notable influence on the private complain. Attitude toward complains profoundly influences the high and level of dissatisfaction with service influences at least. The individual complains to respondents is expressed by the equation.

$Y$  (Private complain) = .270 – (.069) Level of dissatisfaction with service + (.229) Perceived possibility of success + (.422) Attitude toward complain + (.245) Complain intention + Standard error.

From the formula, the following variables are found to have a one-unit increase of Perceived possibility of success, Attitude toward complain and complain intention the private complaint is increased by .229,.422 and .245

respectively, similarly to have one unit increase in level of dissatisfaction with service the individual complains decreased by 0.069 while the other factors remain constant.

Table 4.5: Effect of Level of Dissatisfaction with Service and Perceived Possibility of Success, Attitude toward Complain and Complain Intention on the Defection of Respondents

<i>R value</i>	<i>R square</i>	<i>F value</i>	<i>P value</i>
.541 <sup>a</sup>	.292	39.664	.000*

Source: primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

Table 4.6: ANOVA Table

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1 (Constant)	.956	.209		4.567	.000
Level of Dissatisfaction with service	.140	.053	.149	2.658	.008*
Perceived Possibility of Success	.165	.054	.157	3.046	.002*
Attitude Towards complain	.355	.070	.297	5.040	.000*
Complain Intention	.065	.059	.059	1.104	.270**

Source: primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

To test the influence of independent variables, namely the level of dissatisfaction with service, perceived possibility of success and attitude toward complain and complain intention, on dependent variable defection does not appear to be modifying the subject regression.

The R square value in ANOVA table was .292. This indicates that independent variables account for 29% of the variance. The F value is significant at the 1% level. So, there is an influence of variables taken for the study.

From the Beta value, it observed that attitude toward complain (.297) is considered to be the most significant associated factor that affects the Defection. Perceived possibility of success (.189) is the second important factor followed by the Level of dissatisfaction with service and Complain intention. So, Attitude toward complains and complain purposes had a notable influence on the defection. Attitude toward complains profoundly influences the high and complain intention influences least. The equation expresses the disloyalty to respondents.

Y (Defection) = .956 + (.140) level of dissatisfaction with service + (.165) Perceived possibility of success + (.355) Attitude toward complain + (.065) Complain intention +Standard error.

From the formula, the following variables are found to have a one-unit increase of dissatisfaction with service, perceived possibility of success, Attitude toward complain and complain intention the defection level is increased by .140, .165, .355 and 0.065 respectively while the other factors remain constant.

Table 4.7: Effect of Public Complain and Private Complain about Defection of Respondents

<i>R-value</i>	<i>R Square value</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
.545 <sup>a</sup>	.297	81.656	.000*

Source: primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

Table 4.8: ANOVA Table

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1 (Constant)	1.305	.185		7.071	.000*
Public complain	.169	.059	.146	2.857	.005**
Private complain	.434	.049	.451	8.808	.000*

Source: primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

To test the influence of independent variables, namely public complain and privately complain, on dependent variable defection regression analysis is applied. The R square value was.297, this means that 29% of the variation in Defection is clarified by independent variables. The value of 'F' at 0.001 was found to be significant. There is, therefore, an effect of independent variables, because public complains and complain privately about dependent variable Defection. The hypothesis is therefore dismissed at a rate of one percent level of significance.

From the Beta value, the private complain (.451) is considered to be the most significant associated factor that affects the Defection. Public complaints (.146) is the second important factor. Private oppose profoundly influences, and general complaint influences the least.

$$Y (\text{Defection}) = 1.305 + (.169) \text{ public complain} + (.434) \text{ private complain} + \text{Standard Error.}$$

From the formula, it found that the rate of defection is increased by 0.169 and 0.434 to have a one-unit increase in the public complaint and private complaint, while the other variable remains constant.

Table 4.9: Respondents' Opinion towards Complaining Behavior (Public Complaint and Private Complaint)

<i>Item code</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Friedman Chi-square value and significant</i>
PbC1	'I will discuss the problem with the manager or another employee of the hotel (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.66	1.209	6.06	77.374 P<.001*
PbC2	'I will ask the hotel to take care of the problem (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.72	1.081	5.99	
PbC3	'I will inform the hotel about the problem so that they will able to do better in the future (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.54	1.176	5.71	
PbC4	'I will write a letter to the local newspaper or mass media about my bad experience (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.27	1.275	5.06	
PbC5	'I will report the problem to the consumer agency (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.30	1.288	5.05	
PbC6	'I will complain to the government agency or politician (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.26	1.263	5.02	
PbC7	'I will take legal action against the hotel (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.43	1.232	5.26	
PvC1	'I will speak to my friends about my bad experience (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.60	1.233	5.77	
PvC2	'I will convince my friends, not do business with the hotel (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.51	1.196	5.51	
PvC3	'I will tell my relatives never to use the hotel service again (Rahman et al., 2015)'.	3.50	1.198	5.58	

Source: primary data computed; \* = statistically significant

The above table 4.9 depicts the respondents' views about the public and private complaint actions. For measuring the complaining level, ten items were taken up for the study under two dimensions, namely public complaint and private complaint. From the mean values and mean rank of the items taken, it found that in the general complaint category. If guests are not satisfied with the service provided by the hotels, firstly they will ask the employees and managers to solve the issue because of improving the quality services in the future. If the hotel authorities do not solve the problem, the respondents will take the legal action against the hotel by reporting the issue to consumer agency or will write a letter to the local newspaper or mass media about the bad experience and finally, they will prefer complaining to go government agency or politician. Concerning private complaint action (Rahman et al., 2015), if the respondents are not satisfied, firstly they will speak to their friends about the bad experience (Rahman et al., 2015) and secondly, they convince their friends for not doing business and also inform their relatives for not going to the hotel. To know whether the respondents have differential preference for the public and private actions Friedman chi-square test applied. The null hypothesis framed below.

$H_0$ : There is no significant variation between the respondents' opinions towards the public and private actions.

The result of the analysis indicated that there was a differential rank order preference for the items in public action and private action. (Chi-square=77.374),  $P < 0.001$ . So, it is concluded that respondents' opinions differ significantly at a one percent level. Hence, the respondents' opinion among the items varies.

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS

- The level of dissatisfaction with the service significantly influences all the dependent variables. So the hotel administration should particularly aware and mindful of the dissatisfaction level and frame the strategies for converting into satisfaction.
- Forgiving better services and reducing public and privately complain act. The management of the hotels should encourage the dissatisfied guest to feedback about the overall services.
- The concept of "complaint is a gift" should be emphasized among all the employer especially front office peoples. This strategy enables us to receive more feedback from guests.
- As a result of regression analysis, the level of dissatisfaction with service has a notable influence on attitude towards complain, complain intention, private action and public action. So the management of all hotels should take adequate steps to improve and maintain customer satisfaction levels by doing innovations.
- It noted that the majority of respondents are taken private responses. Therefore, the complaint actions could reduce if the level of dissatisfaction appropriately and effectively managed.
- From the Friedman test, it is found that consumers are likely to refrain from using the company's service, alert family and friends when they are unhappy with the company's services, it is necessary for management to establish an active complaint management system within the organization to identify, facilitate and handle complaints from customers.
- In this regard, some of the complaint management strategies could include encouraging consumers to complain openly, creating grievance policies, training employees to handle actual and potential complaints,

and providing solutions to grievances such as consumer reimbursement, taking corrective action, providing adequate clarification of complaint problems, and apologizing to customers for serving.

## **V. LIMITATIONS**

- The non-serious approach and other, delicate issues related to respondents might influence the responses of the respondents to some extent.
- As this study was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, whose hotel staying patterns were influenced by socio-economic studies and lifestyles, the generalizability of the findings in other parts of India may not be applicable.
- The items related to complaining were collected at the same point of time and with the same instrument, so variance may exist in the responses. However, there was no deviation in discriminate validity among the key constructs.

## **VI. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

- The researcher tried the variables that are only available in popular theories. Other theories are also available to study the research problem. So there is more scope of work available for updating the current variables taken for the study.
- Attitude towards online complaint is different than a physical claim. In order to improve the generalizability of the results, the author also proposes to perform an online survey in different parts of the country.
- “Rural market is booming market and the urban market is stagnating market”. So, comparison can be made between rural and urban hotels complaining behavior in terms of determinants will be useful.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Today, there is some degree of customer dissatisfaction in all organizations. Studying customers' post-dissatisfaction behavior (Ndibusu and Ling 2006) makes it important. It is necessary to understand how consumers behave after becoming disappointed with the provided product or service. In this study, the researcher tried to survey respondents in Chennai. The researcher attempted to identify important factors that affect complaint behavior by a review of existing studies. The determining factors identified by the researcher are level of dissatisfaction with service, the perceived possibility of success, attitude toward complaint, complain intention and complaining behavior. The results show that all variables significantly influence the CCB experience. The findings, suggestions addressed here can substantially assist the researchers in understanding how consumers take complain of action in case of dissatisfied service. Essentially this research helps to explain three fundamental issues: (i) who made complain action (ii) what makes to complain and (iii) which attributes or factors that are relatively important that influence opposes the action (Cho et al., 2003). In today's situation, hotels also need to pay more attention to the guests' complaints to tailor their method of complaint handling Cho et al., 2003. If the hotels that understand the roots of a guests' complaint behavior it will be possible for them to develop effective strategies to resolve complaints, Cho et al., 2003. Moreover, the effective handling of complaints will improve the customer perceptions



of service quality and guest commitment to the hotel (Ngai et al., 2007). To conclude, this study's theoretical framework will definitely useful for future systematic research in the area of consumer complaint behavior.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Cho, Y., Im, I., Fjermestad, J., & Roxanne Hiltz, S. (2003). The impact of product category on customer dissatisfaction in cyberspace. *Business Process Management Journal*, 9(5), 635–651.
- [2] Davidow, M., & Dacin, P.A. (1997). Understanding and influencing consumer complaint behavior: Improving organizational complaint management. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 24(1), 450-456.
- [3] Heung, V.C.S. and Lam, T. (2003), "Customer Complaint Behavior towards Hotel Restaurant Services", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 283-9.
- [4] Homburg, C. & Furst, A. (2005), "How Organizational Complaint Handling Drives Customer Loyalty: an analysis of the Mechanistic and the Organic Approach", *Journal of Marketing*, vol.69, pp.95-114.
- [5] Johnston, R. & Michel, S. (2008), "Three Outcomes of Service Recovery: Customer Recovery, Process Recovery, and Employee Recovery", *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, vol.28 (1), pp.79 – 99.
- [6] Komunda, M.B (2013) Customer Complaints Behaviour, Service Recovery and Behavioural Intentions: Literature Review *International Journal of Business and Behavioral Sciences* Vol. 3, No.7
- [7] Kim, C. Kim, S. Im, S. and Shin, C. (2003), "The Effect of Attitude and Perception on Consumer Complaint Intentions", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, vol. 20 (4), pp.352-71.
- [8] Maxham, J.G. III & Netemeyer, R.G. (2003), "Firms reap what they sow: the effects of shared values and perceived organizational justice on customers' evaluations of complaint handling", *Journal of Marketing*, vol.67, pp. 46-62.
- [9] Ndibusi, N.O. and Ling T.Y. (2006), "Complaint behavior of Malaysian consumers", *Management Research News*, vol. 29(1), pp.65-76.
- [10] Ngai, E.W.T., Heung, V.C.S., Wong, Y.H. & Chan, F.K.Y (2007), "Consumer complaint behavior of Asians and non-Asians about hotel services: An empirical analysis", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 41(11/12), pp.1375–1391.
- [11] Oliver, R.L. (1980), "A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions", *Journal of marketing research*, vol.17, pp.46-49.
- [12] Rahman, M.K.B.A., Haron, S.A., Paim, L.H., Othman, M., Osman, S., & Othman, A.K. (2015). Construct Validation of Consumer Complaint Behavioral Scale in the Malaysian Mobile Phone Services Industry. *Asian Social Science*, 11(24).
- [13] Singh, J. (1988), "Consumer Complaint Intentions and Behavior: Definitional and Taxonomical Issues", *Journal of Marketing*, vol.52 (1), pp.93-107
- [14] Stauss, B. & Schoeler, A. (2004), "Complaint management profitability: What do managers know?" *Managing Service Quality*, vol. 14, 2/3, pp.147-56.
- [15] Tronvoll, B. (2007), "Complainer characteristics when the exit closed", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, vol.18, pp. 25-51.
- [16] Tronvoll, B. (2012), "A dynamic model of Customer Complaint Behaviour from the perspective of dominant service logic", *European Journal of Marketing*. Vol.46, ½, pp.284-305.