

The Role of Service Competencies: Promoting the Relationship between Frontline Employee and Customer

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Abstract

Within the service industry, the serviceperson enhances customer commitment by increasing customer benefits and decreasing customer costs, but is also influenced by trust that promote the interactions between buyer-seller. In the theory of relationship marketing, trust and commitment usually appear in a pair and are inseparable. Researchers indicated that Frontline employee (FLE) competency plays an important role to practices in the formation and maintenance of long-term transactional relationships. The main purpose of this study is to investigate how FLE's service competencies will influence customers' commitment by exploring the role of trust between FLE's service competencies and customers' commitment. This study distinguishes trust and commitment into two dimensional construct perspective to explore consumer-level service relationship. Using survey data from 250 participants recruited from the customers purchasing the cell phone in Taiwan, and this empirical study utilized the structural equation model (SEM) techniques to analyze the data. The theoretical contribution of this study is to offer an explanation how FLEs demonstrate service competencies to build committed relationship with customers by generating trust during the selling process. In practice, the findings of this research provide suggestions for employers to recruit or train FLEs with the crucial service competencies to maximize profits through better or return sales opportunities.

Keywords: frontline employee; competency; trust; commitment