

HOW PRO-CUSTOMER DEVIANCE AND CUSTOMER'S PARTICIPATION SHAPE SERVICE ENCOUNTER OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Given that employees' deviance from their job role has emerged as a central issue in the service management literature, recent developments in the area show that employees' behaviour can also violate referent group norms in a constructive way with pro-organizational or pro-customer intentions. Nevertheless, scant evidence exists on how pro-customer during the service encounter acts on customers' psychological state as well as on their behavioural responses generated towards the service employee or the organization. In addition, as customers' involvement to service delivery remains a key parameter of their experience with the service provider, the role of customer's participation during employees' deviant acting needs further consideration. This study utilizes the social exchange and the equity theory with the aim of investigating how various forms of employee pro-customer deviance generate customer outcomes from a specific service encounter. An experimental design with a 3x2 between-subjects design is adopted. The independent variables manipulated are the three types of pro-customer deviance (i.e. deviant service adaptation, deviant service communication and deviant use of resources conditions) and also whether the customer participates (or not) to the solution of the problem that (s)he is currently facing. The impact of three types of on perceived customer distributive, interactional and procedural justice is explored as well as (cognitive outcomes) on customer's emotional state (affective outcome) is considered. A survey-based experimental approach was used, and the 6 scenarios were answered from 128 respondents who were recruited by invitation using an online platform. This research illuminates deviant employee–customer encounters and grows the ongoing discussion on the impact of employee deviance on various customer outcomes. The results suggest pro-customer deviance as a triggering mechanism of positive cognitive and affective customer responses and also recognize customer participation as a key contributor to these responses. The social exchange and the equity theory are also extended and set as the theoretical link between pro-customer deviance and customer's cognitive response to the organization and the employee.