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Shawn F. Clouse  
*The University Of Montana*

Simona Stan  
*The University Of Montana*

Nader H. Shooshtari  
*The University Of Montana*

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DELIVERING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE: THE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF EMPLOYEE JOB RESOURCEFULNESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Shawn F. Clouse  
The University of Montana  
Simona Stan  
The University of Montana  
Nader H. Shooshtari  
The University of Montana

ABSTRACT

While front line customer service employees’ motivation and ability to provide high quality customer service is paramount for firm performance, it is unclear how employees’ internal resources may interact with organizational support. This paper advances a theoretical model for the possible interactive effects between customer service employees’ job resourcefulness and the external resource support provided by the organization, in the form of formal training, informal coaching, and rewarding mechanism, in determining the employees’ levels of commitment to customer service quality and the development of customer service skill proficiency. An exploratory study conducted on a sample of 98 student employees at a mid-sized university campus recreation center provided a first insight into the forms taken by such interactive effects and the resultant implications for the customer service employees’ job outcomes.

The results of the study found that Job Resourcefulness had a strong positive effect on both the employees’ commitment to Customer Service (CS) quality and CS skill proficiency. CS training had a significant positive effect on both the employees’ commitment to CS quality and CS skill proficiency while the other two forms of support, supervisor coaching and CS rewarding, did not have positive effects.

This study also looked at the interaction of the factors. With respect to employees’ commitment to CS quality, job resourcefulness did not interact with CS training, but interacted negatively with supervisor coaching and positively with CS rewarding. There was a negative impact at high levels of supervisor coaching with employees that had high job resourcefulness. However, employees with low job resourcefulness would benefit greatly from supervisor coaching. Employees with low job resourcefulness responded negatively to CS rewarding by displaying a lower level of commitment to CS quality. Finally, as predicted, employees’ commitment to CS quality had a significant positive impact on their perceived job satisfaction and performance.

The contribution of the paper is to demonstrate that job resourcefulness is indeed a key determinant of CS employee’s ability and motivation. Managers are encouraged to provide formal CS training to all employees, supervisor coaching to those employees who display relatively low job resourcefulness, and stay away from providing extrinsic CS rewards.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Shawn F. Clouse is an Associate Professor of MIS at the School of Business Administration at The University of Montana. He has published in the Journal of Global Business, Journal of Teaching in International Business, Journal of Information Privacy and Security, Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management, the Journal of Educators Online, and Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education. He teaches courses on networking, e-Commerce, project management, multimedia development, and business simulation. His research interests include information privacy, customer service, utilizing technology for teaching and learning, and the technology issues of e-Commerce and business processes.

Simona Stan is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the School of Business Administration, University of Montana where she currently also serves as MBA Director. She has published in the Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Journal of Services Marketing, International Marketing Review, and Journal of Relationships Marketing, among others. Her teaching and research interests include marketing strategy, services marketing, sales, relationship marketing, and international issues.