

**DETERMINANTS OF SERVICE  
BEHAVIOUR AMONG CUSTOMER  
CONTACT PERSONNEL**

by

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## CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being submitted as part of candidature for any other degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and that any help that I have received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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**Kerry Daniel**

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## ABSTRACT

Customer contact personnel (CCP) are recognised as a key determinant in the attainment of customer satisfaction and service quality. While they are readily acknowledged as often representing the service in the eyes of the customer, almost no attention has been given to researching the determinants of service behaviour among CCP, *from the perspective of CCP*.

The work of Shamir (1980), over fifteen years ago, acted as a catalyst for the development of the conceptual model of this thesis. Of particular interest was the inclusion of the first empirical examination of propositions concerning relative status and role conflict. The conceptual model of this thesis extended and developed this work by representing relative status as two constructs, perceived self-status and perceived recognition status, then further, developed the discussion to include the dependent variable of this thesis, service behaviour. Additionally, the conceptual model included other key variables suggested by the literature (uniform perceptions and customer orientation), that directly and indirectly influence service behaviour.

Airline flight attendants were considered suitable respondents for this research as they hold a high boundary spanning position. The useable data from the survey of 446 respondents represented a 36% response rate. The data analysis undertaken included path analysis and structural equation modelling.

Investigation of the data found that greater insight and better managerial diagnostics could be obtained by splitting the sample dependent on the relative status perspective respondents held concerning their perceived self-status, and refining the conceptual model by dividing the dependent variable, service behaviour, into positive and negative service behaviour.

The research findings indicated that the customer orientation of CCP had the greatest influence on service behaviour. Importantly, perceived self-status had a moderating



influence on service behaviour, with the direction dependent on the status perspective of 'not superior' or 'superior'. All other variables of the model were generally found to have significant direct or indirect effects on service behaviour, again influenced by direction if they were mediated through perceived self-status. The structural equation modelling also provided acceptable fits to the data.

Although, the study examined relationships that essentially had never previously been empirically tested and therefore, in their research infancy, the findings considerably aid our understanding of antecedents of service behaviour among CCP. Further, the findings have significant implications for management in service organisations where their frontline service personnel occupy a service role that is considered subordinate, both to the customer and the company.