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Job definitions and service behaviour. An investigation among technical service employees**

Service organizations try to control the service behavior of employees using formal guidelines, training and instructions. However, the specific actions that are performed during the service encounters are predominantly under the discretion of the individual frontline employee. Therefore, the employee's idiosyncratic perception of the job, the subjective job definition, may significantly influence the behavior shown in the service encounter. Based on existing approaches on job definitions with regard to proactive, citizenship, prosocial and safety behavior this paper proposes a method to assess the subjective customer related job definition of service employees in the technical industries. The results of a survey in 49 small technical service organizations indicate good psychometric properties of the measure. A second study including a survey in 20 service organizations and a customer survey reveals that the customer related job definitions of service employees are associated with the service behavior as perceived by the customers. The findings underline the importance of subjective job definitions of service employees for the achievement of effective service behavior. Assessing and changing customer related job definitions may be a promising way to improve service quality.

Key words: **job definition, task redefinition, service interaction, service quality, customer related job definition** (JEL: L84, M31, O14, O15)

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