

# Inaugural lecture

## A role theory perspective on customer citizenship: The self-service encounter

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### INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, digital technologies are significantly transforming the retail landscape and contributing to fundamental changes in the design and provision of services. Innovations like artificial intelligence, frontline service robots, the 'Internet of things', self-service checkouts and mobile banking apps allow for highly personalised and immersive service experiences where greater convenience, efficiency and customer satisfaction can be achieved (Bolton et al., 2018:779, 790; Grewal et al., 2018:85; Kelly et al., 2017:222; Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita & De Beer, 2018:92).

A further important implication of these innovations is that customer-to-customer interactions are becoming a frequent and significant part of the self-service experience for many customers in need of mastering the skills to successfully interact with the technologies. Retailers are not directly involved in self-service encounters, and hence customers are presented with fewer opportunities to engage with frontline employees who would ordinarily provide information or help during service encounters. As a consequence of these developments, customers tend to turn to each other for advice and help when engaging with digital technologies (Kim & Yi, 2017:788, 790; Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita & De Beer, 2018:92).

Furthermore, the advice and help provided by customers during self-service encounters are considered as customer citizenship behaviours, which are broadly defined as 'helpful constructive gestures exhibited by customers that are valued or appreciated by the firm, but not related directly to enforceable or explicit requirements of the individual's role' (Gruen, 1995:461). These 'extra roles' form an integral part of the service script in self-service encounters, as they are performed free of charge by citizen-customers and may greatly assist in ensuring the adoption and use of digital technologies. Subsequently, there is value in giving further consideration to customer citizenship and specifically role theory and the dramaturgical metaphor of the service script as related to self-service encounters.

In contributing to understanding of the matter, the aim of this paper was to provide a role theory perspective on customer citizenship, with specific reference to self-service encounters. According to role theory (as applied to a service context), retailers and their customers can be compared to actors in a play, each with an assigned role and expected behaviours determined by the script (Solomon et al., 1985:101). This paper was particularly interested in the roles that may be performed by citizen-customers and other players immersed in self-service encounters who may contribute to customer citizenship. Extant research on customer citizenship, concerning customers helping fellow customers with digital offerings and advocating the benefits to them, were studied to assist in identifying the 'actors' and roles that may be relevant to the self-service service script and contribute to citizenship behaviours.

The contribution of the paper is threefold. First, the paper offers initial insight into the application of role theory from a customer citizenship perspective. Second, it provides a better understanding of service roles that are relevant to self-service encounters and that seem to extend beyond the dyadic business-to-customer relationship that has largely been the focus in

services marketing literature. Third, the paper demonstrates the relevance of each role in contributing to the success of the service script and customer citizenship behaviours.

The subsequent section examines extant research on customer citizenship involving customer helping and advocacy, with a primary focus on the author's contribution to this field. Against the background provided, the 'actors' and roles in the service script that may contribute to the citizenship behaviours are then advocated. The paper ends with concluding remarks and directions for further research.

## **BACKGROUND ON CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP RESEARCH INVOLVING CUSTOMER HELPING AND ADVOCACY**

### **The nature of customer citizenship helping and advocacy**

Customers tend to help other customers when they have experienced problems using the service as well (Van Tonder, De Beer & Kuyper, 2018). Customer citizenship research involving digital offerings associates helping during self-service encounters with assisting friends, relatives and co-workers who require guidance using the digital offering and solving problems experienced in using it (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:8). Intention to help has also been assessed as providing advice on registering for the digital offering, assisting with registration, demonstrating correct use or utilising certain features thereof (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2017:1130; Van Tonder, De Beer & Kuyper, 2018; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:401; Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita & De Beer, 2018:97).

Advocacy, in contrast, relates to 'having conversations with friends and family in which the service firm is endorsed and may include positive remarks about the firm, recommendation of its service and encouragement to use it' (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:4). Customer citizenship research involving digital offerings associates advocacy during self-service encounters with the intention to promote positive aspects of the self-service option to other customers (such as friends, relatives and co-workers), recommending the self-service option to them and encouraging the use thereof (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2017:1130, 2018:8; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:401; Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita & De Beer, 2018:97).

### **Author's research contribution to customer citizenship helping and advocacy during self-service encounters**

In recent years, the author's research has primarily concentrated on customer citizenship helping and advocacy during self-service encounters. Several empirical studies were conducted with the intention of advancing knowledge on this topic.

Table 1 provides an exposition of these studies, and outlines the constructs and relationships that were empirically examined, along with the relevant literature that supported the relationships proposed.

**Table 1: Exposition of author’s studies that concentrated on customer citizenship helping and advocacy during self-service encounters**

Author’s research that addressed customer citizenship helping and advocacy during self-service encounters	Grounding theory of exogenous construct	Empirically validated relationships from author’s research		Theoretical support for relationships proposed
		Exogenous construct	Endogenous construct	
Van Tonder and Petzer (2018)	Source credibility	Source trustworthiness	Perceived usefulness of digital offering	Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006); Blau (1964); Davis et al. (1989); Kitchen et al. (2014); and Patterson et al. (2003)
		Source expertise	Perceived usefulness of digital offering	
	Perceived value	Perceived usefulness of digital offering	Help intentions	
		Perceived usefulness of digital offering	Advocacy intentions	
Van Tonder and De Beer (2018)	Relationship quality	Customer satisfaction with the digital offering	Customer commitment towards the retailer	Anaza (2014); Anaza and Zhao (2013); Blau (1964); Hennig-Thurau (2004); and Jones et al. (2010)
		Customer satisfaction with the digital offering	Advocacy	
		Customer satisfaction with the digital offering	Helping	
		Customer commitment towards the retailer	Advocacy	
		Customer commitment towards the retailer	Helping	
		<b>Overall:</b> Commitment partially mediates the relationships between customer satisfaction and advocacy, as well as between customer satisfaction and helping.		
Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita and De Beer (2018)	Relationship quality	Affective commitment towards digital offering	Advocacy	Bettencourt (1997); Blau (1964); Choi and Lotz (2018); Curth et al. (2014); Fullerton (2011); Kemp et al. (2014); and Patterson et al. (2003)
		Affective commitment towards digital offering	Helping	
		<b>Overall:</b> Affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between digital offering beliefs (that includes perceptions of perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment) and advocacy.		
Van Tonder, Petzer, Van Vuuren and De Beer (2018)	Relationship quality	Competence trust in digital offering	Advocacy intention	Brown et al. (2005); De Matos and Rossi (2008); Moliner (2009); Moliner et al. (2007); Morgan and Hunt (1994); and Ravald and Grönroos (1996)
		Continuous commitment towards digital offering	Advocacy intention	

Author's research that addressed customer citizenship helping and advocacy during self-service encounters	Grounding theory of exogenous construct	Empirically validated relationships from author's research		Theoretical support for relationships proposed
		Exogenous construct	Endogenous construct	
		Competence trust in digital offering	Continuous commitment towards digital offering	
	Perceived value	Perceived usefulness of digital offering	Continuous commitment towards digital offering	
	Relationship quality and perceived value	<b>Overall:</b> Continuous commitment fully mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and advocacy intention. Continuous commitment partially mediates the relationship between competence trust and advocacy intention		
Van Tonder, De Beer and Kuyper (2018)	Source credibility	Source trustworthiness	Perceived usefulness of digital offering	Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2006); Blau, (1964); Van Tonder and De Beer (2017); Van Tonder and Petzer (2018b); Wang et al. (2016); and Zhou (2012)
		Source trustworthiness	Competence trust in digital offering	
	Relationship quality	Competence trust in digital offering	Perceived usefulness of digital offering	
		Competence trust in digital offering	Help intention	
Van Tonder and De Beer (2017)	Source credibility	Source trustworthiness	Competence trust in digital offering	Blau (1964); Hilligoss and Rieh (2008); Hovland and Weiss (1951); Temerak et al. (2009); and Yi and Gong (2008)
		Source expertise	Competence trust in digital offering	
	Relationship quality	Competence trust in digital offering	Helping intention	
		Competence trust in digital offering	Advocacy intention	

As presented in Table 1, the customer citizenship studies have largely focused on the extent to which the helping and advocacy behaviours may be influenced by factors related to relationship quality, perceived value and source credibility. Accordingly, the three theories were further studied along with their associated constructs, so as to obtain a better understanding of the intricacies and complexities involved in customer citizenship helping and advocacy during self-service encounters. The insights obtained from this examination were helpful in the identification of the ‘actors’ and roles that may apply to the service script involving self-service encounters, which are addressed in the section following this discussion.

### ***Relationship quality***

Relationship quality indicates how strong the relationship is between two stakeholders, such as the retailer and the customer, and is key for obtaining a competitive advantage (Vieira, 2013). High-quality relationships contribute to an effective and long-term business relationship (Van Tonder & Nel, 2018:11) and – as evidenced in Table 1 – are generally measured by examining customer satisfaction, trust and commitment (Athanasopoulou, 2009; De Wulf et al., 2001; Leonidou et al., 2006; Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:3; Vesel & Zabkar, 2010).

*Customer satisfaction* is grounded in the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1981), and involves ‘expectations prior to purchasing and opinions formed about the performance after the purchase has been made’ (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:3). Expectations are informed by customers’ needs, values and earlier experiences (Van Vuuren et al., 2012:84). Customers’ satisfaction levels may then depend on their cognitive interpretations of the difference between the level of service expected and experienced, as well as feelings during and after the service has been experienced (Narteh, 2015:363; Oliver, 1989:1).

Satisfaction in customer citizenship research involving advocacy and helping behaviours is also based on these principles and has previously been studied in relation to the extent to which the citizen-customer considered the level of service expected and experienced during the self-service encounter, and is delighted with the digital offering, believing it was the right thing to use and feels good about using it (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:8).

*Trust* develops over time, following multiple interactions with the retailer, and is important for relationship-building (Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018a:952; Van Tonder & Roberts-Lombard, 2016:2). Grounded in relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), trust is based on the belief that both the retailer and the customer will behave in a way that contributes to the preservation of the relationship they are devoted to, and is therefore seen as a requirement for a transaction to be executed (Johnson & Grayson, 2005; Moreira & Silva, 2015).

Furthermore, trust is considered a multidimensional construct that comprises two sub-dimensions – namely benevolence and credibility – relating to perceptions that both stakeholders involved in the relationship are considerate of others’ needs or have the ability to perform the task and thus can be trusted (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer et al., 1995).

However, customer citizenship research involving advocacy and helping behaviours has shown more interest in credibility (competence) trust. It has examined the construct in relation to the extent to which citizen-customers believe that they can depend on the digital offering to carry out their transactions reliably during the self-service encounter and that technology-related errors do not occur regularly (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2017:1130-1131; Van Tonder, De Beer & Kuyper, 2018; Van Tonder, Petzer, Van Vuuren & De Beer, 2018:1357).

*Customer commitment* is also grounded in relationship marketing theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), and relates to a ‘lasting or enduring intention to build and maintain an ongoing relationship [with another stakeholder]’ (Izogo, 2017:22). The multidimensional construct may involve affective commitment (emotional attachment), normative commitment (obligation to continue the relationship), and calculative commitment (concerning a decision to continue with the relationship as the cost of termination is too great) (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Bothma et al., 2018:17; Hess & Story, 2005; Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:4).

Customer citizenship research involving advocacy and helping behaviours has predominantly studied customers’ overall commitment towards the retailer providing the digital offering, as well as affective and continuous commitment towards the digital offering itself. Overall commitment has been studied relating to whether citizen-customers believe that they and the retailer providing the digital offering are both committed to the relationship, and whether they are being loyal towards this retailer, believe the retailer is prepared to make some sacrifices in the short-term to preserve the relationship, and believe that both the retailer and they perceive the relationship as a long-term partnership (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018:8). Affective commitment has been studied in relation to the citizen-customers’ belief that it is easy to become attached to the digital offering, being attracted to it and believing it has personal meaning to them (Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita & De Beer, 2018:97). Continuous commitment was examined as the citizen-customers’ belief that, based on their time management restrictions, it would be necessary to use the digital offering (Van Tonder, Petzer, Van Vuuren & De Beer, 2018:1357).

Moreover, all three relationship quality dimensions (customer satisfaction, trust and commitment) are important and may contribute to citizen-customers helping fellow customers with digital offerings and advocating the benefits to them. As evidenced by Table 1, customer satisfaction with the digital offering may contribute to customer commitment towards the retailer, as well as advocacy and helping. Customer commitment towards the retailer can also impact advocacy and helping. Commitment towards the retailer partially mediates the relationships between customer satisfaction and advocacy, and customer satisfaction and helping (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2018). Affective commitment towards the digital offering impacts both advocacy and helping. Furthermore, affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between digital offering beliefs (including perceptions of perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment) and advocacy (Van Tonder, Saunders, Lisita & De Beer, 2018). Competence trust in the digital offering may affect advocacy intention. Continuous commitment towards the digital offering may also stimulate customers’ intentions to advocate the benefits to other customers, and may be influenced by competence trust in the digital offering (Van Tonder, Petzer, Van Vuuren & De Beer, 2018).

### ***Perceived value and source credibility***

Perceived value is a multidimensional construct that comprises utilitarian (functional) and hedonic (emotional) value attributes (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Sánchez-Fernández & Iñiesta-Bonillo, 2007:436). The utilitarian and hedonic value dimensions are generally measured through an assessment of the customers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the technology and the extent to which it can be enjoyed (Chiu et al., 2009; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:396). Grounded in the technology acceptance theory (Davis et al., 1989), perceived usefulness is defined as ‘the extent which users believe that their job performance would be enhanced by the use of the particular technology’ (Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:397). Contrastingly, perceived enjoyment concerns ‘the extent to which using a specific product or

service is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, aside from any anticipated performance consequences' (Wang et al., 2018:257).

Customer citizenship research concerned with helping and advocacy has largely focused on *perceived usefulness*, relating to the extent to which the citizen-customer believes the digital offering will enable improved performance, increased productivity and effectiveness in managing one's personal life (Van Tonder, De Beer & Kuyper, 2018; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:401; Van Tonder, Petzer, Van Vuuren & De Beer, 2018:1357).

Source credibility, in contrast, relates to the perception that the source providing the message is trustworthy and has the necessary expertise regarding the content provided (Kelman & Hovland, 1953; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:395). Hence, source trustworthiness and source expertise are key building blocks of perceptions of source credibility (McCroskey & Teven, 1999:90; Ohanian, 1990:41).

*Source trustworthiness* is defined as 'the extent to which the receiver of the message is confident in the source's resolve or willingness to provide a truthful account [of the matter at hand]' (Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:396). A trustworthy source acts with integrity, dignity and truthfulness (Roy et al., 2013), and is considered objective and sincere with no alternative motive (Hovland et al., 1953; Munnukka et al., 2016:184; Shanhuyenzva et al., 2016:441).

Extant research on customer citizenship involving advocacy and helping has noted that, prior to assisting others, citizen-customers may first form views about the digital offerings themselves. These views may be based on their own reasoning of the matter, or be influenced by other citizen-customers whose opinions they adopt because they are perceived as trustworthy. Source trustworthiness was then measured in these studies as the extent to which the source (other citizen-customer) displays characteristics of honesty, reliability, sincerity and trustworthiness (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2017:1130; Van Tonder, De Beer & Kuyper, 2018; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:401).

*Source expertise* is defined as 'the degree to which the source is perceived to have the expertise to provide a truthful account [of the matter at hand]' (Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:396). A source is believed to be credible if he/she has 'professional knowledge' about the matter, which may lead to persuasion to perform a desired action (Roy et al., 2013; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:396). A source's expertise is also evaluated based on perceptions of knowledge, ability and experience, as evidenced by the source's reputation or from prior experiences in dealing with him/her (Hilligoss & Rieh 2008:1469).

Customer citizenship research concerned with helping and advocacy similarly examined the extent to which citizen-customers may adopt the opinions of other citizen-customers, because they are perceived as sources with expertise on the matter at hand. These studies measured source expertise as the degree to which the source (other citizen-customer) knows a lot about the digital offering, is perceived by others as an expert in using the digital offering, and is well experienced in utilising it (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2017:1130; Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b:401).

Table 1 then evidences that perceived value (as measured by perceived usefulness) as well as source credibility (source trustworthiness and source expertise) are key in contributing to citizen-customers helping fellow customers with digital offerings and advocating the benefits to them.

As was further validated by empirical research, the extent to which citizen-customers adopt the views of other citizen-customers regarding the usefulness of the digital offering is dependent on whether other citizen-customers are perceived as credible (as measured by source trustworthiness and source expertise). Perceptions of perceived usefulness may then contribute to citizen-customers' intentions to continue with the goodwill and further help more customers who are less experienced with the digital offering and advocate the benefits to them (Van Tonder & Petzer, 2018b). Similar effects may be obtained when citizen-customers accept other credible citizen-customers' views about whether the digital offering can be trusted. Perceptions of competence trust may then influence citizen-customers' intentions to engage in further advocacy and helping behaviours (Van Tonder & De Beer, 2017). Van Tonder, De Beer and Kuyper (2018) also found that, when assessed simultaneously, source trustworthiness may impact on perceptions of perceived usefulness and competence trust. Competence trust, in turn, may impact on perceptions of perceived usefulness of the digital offering and citizen-customers' intentions to help fellow customers with less experience in using the digital offerings. Finally, as evidenced by Table 1, the connection between citizen-customers' perceptions of perceived value and relationship quality may further strengthen their intention to engage in helping and advocacy behaviours. Perceived usefulness of the digital offering influences continuous commitment towards the digital offering. Continuous commitment fully mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and advocacy intention. Continuous commitment partially mediates the relationship between competence trust and advocacy intention (Van Tonder, Petzer, Van Vuuren & De Beer, 2018).

## **‘ACTORS’ AND ROLES IN THE SERVICE SCRIPT CONTRIBUTING TO CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP HELPING AND ADVOCACY**

Against the background provided in the previous section, it was possible to argue that there are three ‘actors’ in the service script who may contribute to customer citizenship helping and advocacy. These actors and their roles are further described below.

### **Role 1: Retailer as the relationship quality-builder**

As noted in the previous section, the studies presented in Table 1 provide empirical evidence of the extent to which relationship quality (as measured by customer satisfaction, trust and commitment) impacts on citizen-customers' willingness to help fellow customers with a digital offering and advocate the benefits thereof. In the context of the studies conducted, customers' perceptions of relationship quality were then largely based on their satisfaction with and trust in the digital offering provided by the retailer, as well as their commitment towards the retailer and its digital offering. Hence, it seems that the retailer influences the citizen-customers' perception of relationship quality and could be considered as playing the role of the relationship quality-builder in the service script that, through their relationship quality practices, may inspire citizen-customers to help fellow customers with the digital offering and advocate the benefits to them.

The associated characteristics and attributes of the relationship quality constructs, as operationalised in the previous section, are then further helpful in understanding the possible role script of the relationship quality-builder and the actions required in contributing to citizen-customers' satisfaction, trust and commitment levels. Specifically, it is advocated that the role of the relationship quality-builder may involve ensuring the citizen-customers' experiences match or exceed their expectations of the digital offering and that they believe using it was the right thing. Playing their role may entail taking action and developing the necessary policies to convince citizen-customers that they can depend on the digital offering to carry out their



transactions during the self-service encounter in a reliable manner, and that technology-related errors do not occur on a regular basis. The core of their act may revolve around convincing the citizen-customer that they are also committed to the relationship, perceive the relationship as a long-term partnership, and are prepared to make sacrifices in the short-term to preserve the relationship. Therefore, as relationship quality-builders, they may facilitate attractive digital offerings to which citizen-customers become attached and believe that it is not possible to effectively manage their lives without the technology.

### **Role 2: Other citizen-customers as traditional marketers**

In view of the remaining relationships presented in Table 1 and which were addressed in the previous section, evidence exists that other citizen-customers, perceived as trustworthy and with expertise, may contribute to persuading citizen-customers of the usefulness of the digital offering and that it can be trusted. Accordingly, it seems that while the retailer in the service script focuses on building relationship quality, it is the task of other citizen-customers (who are already competent users of the digital offering) to take over the traditional marketing role, and focus on convincing citizen-customers of the benefits that the digital offerings provide, which may then stimulate further helping and advocacy behaviours. Therefore, other citizen-customers, as 'traditional marketers', may also play an important role in the service script by contributing to customer citizenship during self-service encounters.

The characteristics and attributes of the perceived usefulness, competence trust, source trustworthiness and source expertise constructs, as was operationalised in the previous section, are then helpful in understanding the possible role script of the other citizen-customer as a traditional marketer. Specifically, it is advocated that the role of other citizen-customers as traditional marketers may involve ensuring citizen-customers are convinced that the digital offering is useful, improves their performance and increases their productivity and effectiveness in managing their personal lives. The role may also involve convincing citizen-customers that they can trust and depend on the digital offering to carry out their transactions during the self-service encounter in a reliable manner, and that technology-related errors do not occur regularly. However, the technique applied by the other citizen-customers in performing their traditional marketer role is important, as it determines whether the citizen-customer will accept the views presented to them. The other citizen-customers need to display characteristics of honesty, reliability, sincerity and trustworthiness. They also need to create the impression that they know a lot about the digital offering, are perceived by others as experts in using the digital offering, and are well experienced in using it. These aspects may assist in enhancing the other citizen-customers' credibility and contribute to the adoption of their views by citizen-customers.

### **Role 3: The citizen-customer**

The third role in the service script is, of course, that of the citizen-customer tasked with helping fellow customers with digital offerings and advocating the benefits to them. This role should be perceived as the leading role in the service script, as in the absence of direct involvement from the retailer and its employees the onus is on the citizen-customer to ensure fellow customers adopt and successfully use the digital offerings.

Following the characteristics and attributes of the customer citizenship helping and advocacy constructs, as was operationalised in the previous section, the role script of citizen-customers providing help may entail guiding fellow customers in registering for, or the correct use of, the digital offerings and in solving problems fellow customers may experience. Help may be

provided verbally or through physical demonstrations to the fellow customer. In contrast, the role script for advocacy behaviours may entail saying positive things about the digital offering and encouraging fellow customers to use it.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This paper provided more insight into customer citizenship, role theory and the dramaturgical metaphor of the service script as related to self-service encounters. Specifically, as informed by the author's research, the paper identified three 'actors' that may form part of the service script involving customer citizenship helping and advocacy behaviours during self-service encounters: (1) the retailer as the relationship quality-builder, (2) the other citizen-customer as the traditional marketer, and (3) the citizen-customer. Brief role descriptions were also provided, which are useful to understand the behaviours of the 'actors', the relationships among them and their contributions to customer citizenship helping and advocacy behaviours during self-service encounters.

Essentially, the paper supports the initial discussion of Solomon et al (1985:101) that each actor in the service script has a pre-assigned role. The paper further demonstrates that it is necessary for the 'actors' in the service script to collaborate with each other to achieve the common goal of ensuring greater adoption and use of digital offerings. This point is important as it also sheds light on relationships relevant in the modern retail environment that seem to extend beyond the retailer/customer dyad and the traditional roles of 'seller' and 'consumer' that marketing has assigned to them for many years.

The success of the service script may depend on the extent to which the 'actors' understand their roles and are able to play their part with confidence. In their initial study of the service script, Solomon et al. (1985:102-104) indicated that role clarity avoids confusion and tension among the 'actors', while confidence contributes to role validation and successful interaction among the players in the script. It is also important that the actors agree to the roles they have been assigned to play to enhance productivity and effectiveness. Hence, future research could further investigate these matters to determine strategies that can be employed to enhance the 'actors' role performance during self-service encounters.

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