

## **The role of ethnicity in domestic intercultural service encounters**

### **Abstract**

The current study investigates how ethnicity influences consumer (dis)satisfaction regarding service encounters in multicultural domestic service markets. The study interviews 306 ethnic Malay and Chinese respondents in Malaysia using the critical incident technique. The respondents provide 612 critical incidents for content analysis. Based on content analysis and inter-judge reliability, seven sub-categories (grouped within three major categories) emerge as integral determinants of service encounters in multicultural domestic service markets. The findings suggest intra- versus inter-ethnic affiliation between consumer and service provider influences the evaluation of domestic intercultural service encounters. Specifically, consumers are found to be more satisfied (dissatisfied) when service encounters are with service providers with the same (different) ethnic affiliation as themselves. The present study extends current literature by examining the role of ethnicity in service encounters in multi-cultural service markets. The identified determinants and associated findings from the present study further provide practical insights for managers regarding how different ethnic consumers are likely to respond to service encounters in such markets. The study indicates that different service expectations exist between consumers from different ethnic affiliations. © 2015 Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg