

Exploring The Communication Gaps Factor Affecting The Service Delivery: A Case Study In Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri (Lhdn) Sungai Petani Branch

Tengku Hilmi bin Tengku Abdul Kadir and Muhammad Haniff bin Muhammad Kamal

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti
Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Merbok, Kedah

ABSTRACT

This study examines the communication gap factors (integrated service marketing communication, managing customer expectations, propensity to overpromising and horizontal communication) effects toward service delivery in the organization of Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri (LHDN) Sungai Petani Branch. Other objectives are to find the most contributing factors of communication gap toward service delivery. The research uses the SERVQUAL Model, which is a concise multi-item scale with good reliability and reliability. It was designed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1992) to be applicable across a broad spectrum or service culture. The hypotheses are tested using correlation and regression analysis. Simple linear correlation and regression is used to determine the linear relationship between the pairs of variables.

Keywords: Communication Gap Factors, Service Delivery, Service Quality (SERVQUAL)

INTRODUCTION

The study is aimed to explore the existing gap between the service delivery of LHDN Sungai Petani Branch and the external communication. Thus this study may deliver some benefits, as it is related with the significance of the study. It is hoped that this study will rightly reveal and explore the quality service by examining the gaps between the service delivery itself and the communication properties. Apart from that, this study also would help to clarify the factors and effects of the existing gaps that will be examined and identified as to make future improvement of service in term of quality service.

A problem that arises too often is that marketing communications promise benefits that the institutions are unable to deliver. It is important in developing communications programs to link the benefits promised firmly to the attributes, characteristics, or operational capabilities of the institution needed to deliver these benefits. In short, service delivery has to live up to service promises, especially if the service provider is “claiming” the quality service position (Gutman & Miaoulis, 2003).

The fourth gap exists when there is a discrepancy between the external communication of an organization and the actual service being delivered (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1992). That is, organization make promises that they cannot or do not keep. Oliver (1980) describes this type of communication as direct and indirect messages including printed, brochures, radio and television announcements or ads in local newspapers and magazines, which make promises like friendliest service, accessible programs, easiest registration procedures, etc.

In contrast, not communicating the whole picture to customers may cause problem. By leaving out information, organization may forfeit opportunities to favourably influence customer service perceptions. Customer who made aware of the step which organizations were taking to better serve them were likely to perceive a service more favourably. Zeithaml (1992) state that when there is a breakdown of communication between those who delivered the service and those who described or promote the service to customer, an organization is likely to make exaggerated promises or failed to communicated to customers aspects of the service intended to serve them well.

Brown (1992) describes two roadblocks; as he refers to them; as he refers to them, which any organization may face when starting a quality service plan. These barriers relate to structural change and budgeting. Even though a company implements a training program for front line staff to improve quality service, they were bound to fail according to Brown (1992) because the company's structure has not changed. Like Zeithaml et al. (1990), Brown (1992) feels this is management's responsibility. They must restructure the company to align it with both the internal and external customer's needs.

Integration between sales (the given service deliveries) and marketing is critical to the performance of both functions and the achievement of organizational objectives (Beverland, 2001). From this statement it can be said here the delivery and the marketing itself should be integrated, as in communicating both of them to achieve the organizational objectives; to *deliver* the services to the customer.

Numerous authors call on the concept of expectation when discussing the nature and management of services. Most often, customer satisfaction and/or overall service quality is seen as a function of the comparison between a customer's expectations and his or her perception of actual service (Solomon, 1985; Zeithaml, 1993; Walker, 1995). Bitner and Hubbert (1994) note the distinction among the three concepts service encounter satisfaction, overall service satisfaction, and service quality. Although there is general agreement that both overall service quality and customer satisfaction are in some way influenced by the expectations of the customer, considerable work remains to be done to describe exactly how this process takes place. Despite extensive literature in the service quality area that incorporates the idea of expectations, with few exceptions (Zeithaml, 1993; Boulding, 1993; Spreng, 1996; Hamer, 1999), the concept of "expectations" it is seldom defined.

Overpromising could also be recounted with the uncontrolled of ever-increasing expectation of public service, thus this situation have led managers to become customer focused (Guest and Taylor, 1999; Robinson, 1995, 1999), which in turn has resulted in the introduction of customer care initiative in order to improve the quality of service provision. The problem arises when the organization doesn't make enough readily limitations of what they can do and they can't, which also explains the organizational limitations of its capabilities. Later this

problem would set the effort to be the promises to the customers, but whenever the promises are not delivered as have been spoken; this would trigger the problem of overpromising (Robinson, 2003).

Horizontal communications are the lateral information flows that occur both within and between departments of an organization (Daft and Steers, 1985). The basic purpose of horizontal communication is to coordinate people and departments so that the overall goals of the organization are achieved. If high service quality is to be perceived by the consumer, horizontal communication among departments is necessary.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this study covered all employees in Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri (LHDN), Sungai Petani, Kedah. LHDN Sungai Petani has 119 employees from eight different departments. The sample size decided in the study was 92 respondents which followed Sekaran (2006).

In this research, the respondents been selected by using convenience sampling. According to Sekaran (2006), convenience sampling refers to the collection of information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it. The researchers were distributed questionnaires randomly to the employees in LHDN Sungai Petani, Kedah.

Data Collection

The source of data collection is primary. The data collection method for this research is questionnaire. According to Sekaran (2006) questionnaire is a preformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. This questionnaire is divided into two sections which are Section A and B. Section A covered the background of the respondents while section B consists of independent variables of this research.

Data Analysis

This research will elaborate on the various statistical tests and the interpretation of the results analyze by using SPSS version 15.0 for window program system for the processing of raw data received, data analysis and to show the findings of the data that has been collected. There are four (4) statistical tests that have been used in this research. The four statistical tests is Cronbach's Alpha, Descriptive Analysis (frequency distribution), Multiple Regression and Spearman's rank-order correlation.

RESULT

Gap 4 is described as the discrepancy between service delivery within LHDN and the external communication. Thus this research may have significance in term of providing LHDN some information regarding to which extent to which contact personnel of LHDN are aware of external communications to customer before they occur, communication between departments inside the organization, any similarity of procedures across departments and so on.

CONCLUSION

As conclusion, often there is an imbalance between the time and money invested in customer acquisition and customer retention. An example of this is when large amounts of time and money are spent on promotional materials to attract the customer, but front line staffs are left uninformed and unable to deal with customer inquiries once the materials are distributed. Information on registration procedures, start dates, program details, price information, facility descriptions and instructor information are all important components of the service delivery process. If front line staffs are not aware of what promises are made or what systems are in place, they often become frustrated and short during customer inquiries. Customers then become unsatisfied with the service and decide not to register for a program, or worse, not to return at all. Raising expectation to unrealistic levels can lead to increased up front

business; however, inevitably it will cause customer disappointment and discourage repeat business.

REFERENCES

- Bitner, M.J. and Hubbert, A.R. (1994). "Encounter satisfaction versus overall satisfaction versus quality: the customers' voice", in Rust, R.T. and Oliver, R.L. (Eds). *Service Quality: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Boulding, W., Kalna, A., Staelin, R. and Zeithaml, V.A. (1993). "A dynamic process model of service quality: from expectations to behavioural intentions". *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30, 7-27.
- Brown, S.A. (1992). Total quality service: How organizations use it to create
- Coakes. S, Steed L. & Price J. (2008). *SPSS Version 15.0 for Windows: Analysis without Anguish*. Australia; Wiley
- Daft, and Steers, R. (1985). *Organization: A Micro/Macro Approach*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Guest, C. and Taylor, P. (1999). "Customer oriented public leisure services in the United Kingdom". *Managing Leisure: An International Journal*, 4(2), 94-106.
- Gutman, J. and Miaoulis, G. (2003). "Communicating a quality position in service delivery: an application in higher education". *Managing Service Quality*, 13(2), 105-111.
- Hamer, L.O., Liu, B.S-C. and Sudharshan, D. (1999). "The effects of intra-encounter changes in expectations of perceived service quality models". *Journal of Service Research*, 1(3), 275-89.
- Oliver, R. (1980). "A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions". *Journal of Marketing Science*, 18, 51-65.
- Robinson, L. (1995). *Quality Management – An Investigation into the Use of Quality Programmes in Local Authority Sport and Leisure Facilities*, Institute of Sport and Recreation Management, Melton Mowbray.
- Robinson, L. (1999). "Following the quality strategy: the reasons for the use of quality management in UK public leisure facilities". *Managing Leisure: An International Journal*, 4(4), 201-17.
- Robinson, L. (2003). "Committed to quality: the use of quality schemes in UK public leisure services". *Managing Service Quality*, 13(3), 247-255.
- Sekaran, U. (2006). *Research Methods For Business: A Skill Building Approach*, (4th ed.). New Delhi: Wiley-India.

- Solomon, M., Surprenant, C., Czepiel, J. and Gutman, E. (1985). "A role theory perspective on dyadic interactions: the service encounter". *Journal of Marketing*, 49, 99-111.
- Spreng, R.A., MacKenzie, S.B. and Olshavsky, R.W. (1996). "A re-examination of the determinants of consumer satisfaction". *Journal of Marketing*, 60(3), 15-32.
- Vrontis, D. (2006). "Strategic marketing planning for a supplier of liquid food packaging products in Cyprus". *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 250-261.
- Walker, J.L. (1995). "Service encounter satisfaction: conceptualized". *Journal of Services Marketing*, 9(1), 5-14.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L. and Parasuraman, A. (1993). "The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service". *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21(1), 1-12.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L.L. (1990). *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L.L. (1992). "Strategic positioning on the dimensions of service quality", in Swartz, T.A., Bowen, D.E. and Brown, S.W. (Eds). *Advances in Services Marketing and Management*, 2, 207-28.