Design for Scientific RENAISSANCE

The impact of management commitment to service quality and customer satisfaction: A Review of Saudi Arabia public service sector

Awad Abomaleh [a], Ibrahim Zahari [b]
Graduate Business School
Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Putrajaya Campus, Malaysia
[a]Email: abomalah@yahoo.com
[b]Email: dr.ibrahimzahari@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the mediating role of employee involvement in the links between management commitment to service quality, employee performance, and customer satisfaction in an immigration department at Saudi International Airports. Self-administered questionnaire will use in this study to collect the related data to examine the relationship between management commitment to service quality and employee involvement and how employee involvement affects employee performance and customer satisfaction and test whether employee involvement mediates the management commitment to service quality, employee performance, and customer satisfaction. Data will collect through distributing two kinds of questionnaires. One for frontline employees to measure management commitment to service quality, employee involvement, and employee performance, and another for their customers to measure their satisfaction.

Keywords: Management Commitment, Service Quality, Employee Involvement, Employee Performance, Customer Satisfaction, Saudi Arabia.

1. Introduction

Public sector especially service sector considers its employees are cornerstone to provide their services to customers because their employees reflect the image of the organization and affect customer perceptions of service quality. Top management must focus on its employees by training, empowerment, involvement, and rewards to provide excellent service to beneficiaries. When management is committed to improving service quality, employees will be provided with more resources for training. Such training may enhance the skills of employees in dealing with unexpected work problems and their competence in making appropriate suggestions for decisions making. In the last years, the growth of public sector in Saudi Arabia has been remarkable, but the number of approved posts has risen faster than applicants, and it is a feature of the public sector since the 1970s that around one-third or more of established posts have remained vacant. More recently, there is growing concern that the expansion of public sector employment, and the excess numbers of approved posts in the general budget, has produced overstaffing, managerialproblems, and low productivity (Al-

Shakhawi, 1994). Moreover, employees could be given increased control over different aspects of service delivery. In this context, they would enjoy more discretion on the job and be allowed to take more responsibility for solving problems and making decisions relating to service policies and the service environment (Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001; Rees, 1995). For example, employees could be allowed to tailor the service organization's offerings to meet the specific needs of their customers without going through the layers of bureaucracy common in large service organizations. Finally, management may communicate the firm's vision of service to employees. When this vision is related to the wellbeing of the employees, the employees would be willing to make suggestions on how to improve services. Accordingly, employees would be driven by the management's vision of service to become effectively involved in delivering services to customers. Based on that, this study aims to explore the mediating role of employee involvement in the links between management commitment to service quality, employee performance and customer satisfaction. Based on that, this research aims to explore the mediating role of employee involvement in the links between management commitment to service quality, employee performance and customer satisfaction.

1.1 Problem Statement

Saudi Arabia public sector is greatly suffering from poor employee performance and low customer satisfaction and there are several statements from officials which contend that most of the complaints they receive are because of weak performance and misdealing of employees with customers at public sector that reported in the media that the most important issues faced by the customers, whether man or women related to weakness of performance at public service sectors and bad dealings with customers (Alriyadh Newspaper, 29 September 2011).

1.2 Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

i. Is there any relationship between Management Commitment to Service Quality and Employee Involvement?

ii. Is there any relationship between Employee Involvement, Employee Performance, and Customer Satisfaction?

iii. Is Employee Involvement mediating role between Management Commitment to Service Quality, Employee Performance, and Customer Satisfaction?

1.3 Research Objectives

In order to answer the main research objective, the following four specific objectives are examined through empirical analysis:

i. To investigate the relationship between Management Commitment to Service Quality and Employee Involvement.

ii. To investigate the relationship between Employee Involvement, Employee Performance, and Customer Satisfaction.

iii. To investigate the mediating role of Employee Involvement between Management Commitment to Service Quality, Employee Performance, and Customer Satisfaction.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

There are three hypotheses that are going to be tested in this research:

H_1: There is a relationship between management commitment to service quality and employee involvement.

H_2: There is a relationship between employee involvement, employee performance, and customer satisfaction.

H_3: Employee Involvement is mediating role between Management Commitment to Service quality, Employee Performance, and Customer Satisfaction.

2 Literature review

2.1 Management commitment to service quality (MCSQ)

Management commitment to service quality means conscious choice of quality initiatives and operational and strategic options for the organization and engaging in activities such as providing visible leadership and resources for the adoption and implementation of quality initiatives (Ahmed and Parausraman, 1994). Forrester (2000) suggested that management commitment to service quality should be conceptualized and measured from the employees' perspective which let Babakus and his colleagues (2003, p. 275) took his suggestion and added another definition for management commitment to service quality as "employees' appraisal of an organization's commitment to nurture, develop, support, and reward its employees to achieve service excellence". Additional studies showed that management commitment to service quality will helps employees to understand their service roles and eventually leads to high job satisfaction and positive employees' service behaviors toward their customers (Clark et al.,2009; Kim et al., 2009). Management, through participating in quality development, provides frontline employees with guidance and encouragement during the service delivery process. Management commitment to service quality depends on put the "right" employees in place and rewarding good service. In any improvement programme for quality, top management has to be seen to believe in customer service and also demonstrate that service quality and customer service really matter before a service culture becomes very strongly and difficult to change and a significant and sustained improvement in service quality and customer satisfaction occurs. When the senior management put aside the practical difficulties the lack of top management commitment and the focus of a sales climate together

may have been merely paying lip service to service quality improvement (Newman, 2001). Based on the definition of Ahmed and Parasuraman (1994) about management commitment to service quality, there are three components of management commitment to service quality: first, management's service vision which means the senior management should reflect a true commitment to service and not just paying lip-service to it. second component, management's personal involvement which also means providing personal input in the service delivery process, and the last component refers to empowerment that means encouraging customer-contact employees to speak their mind and get the job done (Cheung and To, 2010).

2.2 Employee involvement (EI)

Employee involvement considered as an important factor of a large number of quality management initiatives. From the best 25 TQM practices that they identified, there are four items are connected intimately with employee involvement, namely: HRM, empowerment, employee satisfaction and their appraisal, rewards and recognition (Sumukadas, 2006). Sumukadas (2006) said the main part of employee involvement research has been conducted in the organizational behavior field. But several research are still not yet to get acquainted on employee involvement's effect on employee satisfaction, employee performance, and which leads to impact on organizational performance in the end. Logically, employee involvement means that employee who is a relative of the problem considered the authorized person to deal with it and has the opportunity to make the most appropriate decisions to improve that situation (Sun et al, 2000). Employee involvement is defined as "the extent to which employees producing a product or offering a service has a sense of controlling their work, receiving information about their performance, and being rewarded for the performance of the organization" (Lawler et al., 1992, p.2). From this definition, employees who have sense of involvement may intrinsically experience must fostered extrinsically by management practices (Sumukadas, 2006).

2.3 Employee performance (EP)

Employees are the most important resources in organizations, without them, the organizational goals and objectives may not be achieved. There are two important variables are crucial to the issue of ethical leadership in improving employee job performance: trust and employee commitment (Shukurat, 2012). According to Shukurat (2012) trust considers an important matter in all organizations because it has effect on performance directly. In case it has broken will leads to serious negative effect. According to Harrison et al. (2006) job performance is one of the most issues in organizational research. Employee job performance is considered behaviors of employees that exhibited to aid in the achievement of organizational goals (McCloy et al., 1994). Employee performance is crucial for the company to survival and success (Watt, 2007). Based on Bandura (1986, 1997) managers play important roles in helping their employees form self-efficacy beliefs. Managers play a role in specify the quality and job performance level that showed by employees (Mackenzie et al., 2001).

2.4 Customer satisfaction (CS)

There are many ways to define customer satisfaction. Oliver (1997) defines satisfaction as the consumer's fulfillment response, it is an evaluation of the features of products or services, or assessment of a product or service offered and measure the level of fulfillment is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000, p. 75) defined Customer satisfaction as customers' evaluation of the product or service in terms of achieving their needs and expectations. Customer satisfaction considered as conceptualized customers' assessments about quality of service of terms the gap between expectations and perceptions of service performance level (Parasuraman et al., 1988). They showed the differences of the "expectations" meaning where there are two meanings for the term "expectations" in the service quality literature and consumer satisfaction literature. In the first, it means viewed as desires or wants of consumers, i.e., what they feel a service provider should offer rather than would offer. On the other hand, in the latter, it means is viewed as predictions made by consumers about what is likely to happen during an impending transaction or exchange. They developed an instrument for measuring service quality offered by service organizations called SERVQUAL. This instrument has five dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility).

3 .Methodology

3.1 Conceptual Model

The aim of this research is to explore the mediating role of employee involvement in the links between management commitment to service quality, employee performance, and customer satisfaction in public service sector as shown in Figure 1.

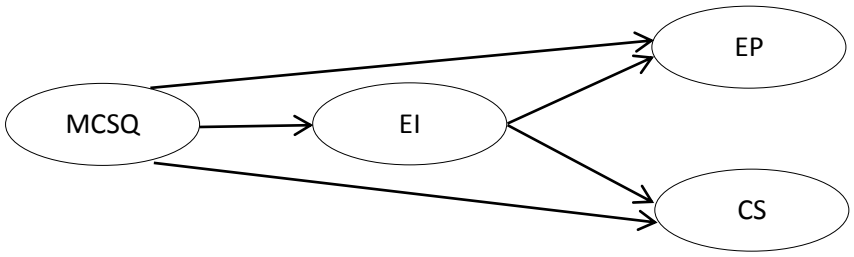

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3.2 Data Approach

Based on Thomas (2003) this study will take a quantitative approach, meaning that a systematic process will be used, where data are utilized to test hypotheses.

3.2.1 Population and sample

Population that will address by this study include two parties. They are Immigration Departments that work at All the four international airports in Saudi Arabia (king Abdulaziz airport, King Khaled airport, King Fahd airport, and Prince Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz airport) and customers (international travelers) who connect with staff of immigration. Based on that, the sample will be all the frontline employees in an Immigration Departments at king Abdulaziz airport and Prince Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz airport and customers will be departing travelers who deal with Immigration Departments at these International Airports.

3.2.2 Measures and instrumentation

Two questionnaires will be developed, one for employees of Immigration Department and one for their customers. The questionnaire for employees included a demographic part and items for management commitment to service quality, employment involvement, and employee performance. The questionnaire for customers included a demographic part and 22 items for of service quality. In each questionnaire, the items selected for the constructs were adapted from prior studies to ensure content validity. All items, except demographic information, were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 =“Not at all” to 7 = “Frequently, if not always”. The questionnaire for Immigration Departments employees will be translated into Arabic language. While, the questionnaire for customers (departing travelers) will be written in both English and Arabic.

3.3 Data Collection

Sekaran in 2003 pointed out that primary data is data obtained through interview, questionnaires, observation and these data can be analyzed for research purposes. Based on that, this research is conducted using only primary data where includes questionnaire to obtain relevant information in supporting the hypotheses deduced. In order to ensure good response rate, the researcher decided to send as many questionnaires as possible by hand.

3.4 Data Analysis

After data collection, structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS 21(Wu, 2007) will use to perform the analysis in this study. A two-stage approach was used (Anderson & Gerbing, 1998) involving duplicate filtering and estimating the measurement model, followed by estimating the structural model.

4 Finding of this study

The findings from this study can help employees at the public sector to be more committed and very closely allied with management goals regarding service quality. Make employees to

feel self-realization and feel that they are partners in their organization regarding service quality. These consequently affect their satisfaction and productivity which in turn lead to their high performance. The study contributes to improve employee behavior towards customers which has direct impact on impression of customers regarding the quality of service provided. Increase government efforts in improving public service and providing decent life for its people, which can lead to increase stability and security in the kingdom. Finally, assist in further satisfying the millions of Muslim pilgrims from across the globe, who visit Saudi Arabia annually. Also help to depict Saudi Arabia as an attractive place for foreign investment and also encourage immigrant capital to return back to the nation.

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