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A Conceptual Paper on Customer Satisfaction Toward Commercial Records Center Services

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ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction, from the service quality perspective, has emerged as a channel for assessing customers' perceptions or expectations of services in order to normalize existing services. Commercial Records Center Company in Malaysia, understanding the necessity of complying with customer perception of high quality records management service, has begun to search for alternative ways to satisfy their clientele on the basis of service quality. This study therefore aims to meet this need by developing a model to assess the extent to which service quality indicators and other explanatory attributes may be used to forecast customer satisfaction, from a service quality perspective based on SERVQUAL Model. The final model may be used to design a simple measurement or monitoring process of Commercial Records Center performance, and it may also be a useful instrument for diagnosing service quality locally. This study further provides a keystone for other studies and may also stimulate the momentum of current research on service quality and customer satisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

Commercials records center industry have grown and prospered over the past few years. Commercials records center has gained more clients by providing the advanced services with latest technological equipment and standardize practices to meet their customers' expectations of service quality. Customer service quality is critical at Commercials records center for their sustenance and growth. The outsourcing in records keeping movement is a rapidly growing industry worldwide. It is a competitive industry, and there is an increase of customer power and managers need to focus on customer service (Afthinos, Theodorakis and Nassis, 2005). Interest in service quality has grown over the last decade due to increasing competition, which has led managers into finding ways to improve profitability. Service quality attracts more and better customers to the business which, in turn, leads to increased profits (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2006). Harris (2003) believes that customers in the 21st century are more sophisticated in the way they search for and make purchases. Customers want stress-free experiences that are user friendly and validate their choice.

Commercials records center companies need information to help them monitor and improve their services to meet their clients' expectations of service quality. Customer service is the most effective and least expensive way to market a business. Providing a product or service alone is not enough in today's competitive economic environment (Harris, 2003). According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991), strong service quality comes from inspired leadership throughout an organization. The focus of this research study is to determine clients' perceptions of service quality at Commercials records center. The aim of this research is to offer management insight into improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service quality and the opportunity to address any issues impacting the delivery of quality service at Commercials records center. In doing so, Commercials records center companies will increase their retention of existing clients and signing up new clients to acquire a larger share of the market.

Purpose of the Study:

This conceptual paper is intended to identify the level of service quality at commercial records center in Malaysia from customer's perspective and to determine most desired and critical dimension of quality services. This is done by exploring and analyzing relevant literatures as the actual research is still at early stage.

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Methodology:

The methodology that is used is literature study, where this problem has yet been researched before or need to be expanded. Moreover, literature approaching also explains the relation between current researches with the previous research and explains the analysis of previous research theory. Source review were published in academic journals, book chapters, peer review studies, conference papers also theses and dissertations. In addition authoritative web sites were also examined to provide an overview of the issue research. To ensure current knowledge and evidence being used in this paper, the year of publication of the empirical paper and website information must be from the year 2000 onwards. However researcher also captured significantly relevant research or empirical papers which were published earlier than the year 2000.

Conceptual Framework:

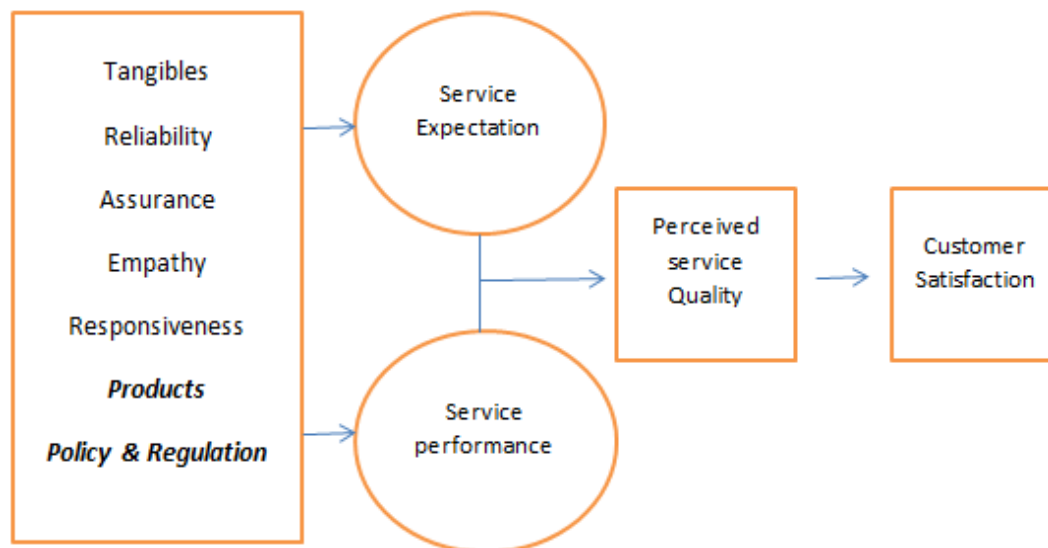


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) explains the underlying process, which is applied to guide this study. As discussed above, the SERVQUAL model is suitable for measuring service quality and customer satisfaction in commercial records center offering records keeping services using the service quality dimensions which are modified with the addition of products and policy. This is because researcher assumption cannot use a generic SERVQUAL model in this context since it may not be adequate to assess service quality in commercial records center and will not provide a good measure of customers' perceptions. Researcher assume that 'products' and 'policy' form the primary motive why organization aka clients make engagement with commercial records center and so cannot be neglected when measuring service quality. This is line with Gronroos, (1982), technical quality dimension which is used to measure service quality.

The researcher intend to use the same dimensions to measure both service quality and customer satisfaction because researcher assume both are related (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and customer satisfaction is an antecedent of service quality (Negi, 2009). The SERVQUAL approach integrates the two constructs and suggests that perceived service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction (Negi, 2009). Therefore, in this research, the initial 22 items of SERVQUAL model are modified and additional items are included to measure the perceived service quality and customer satisfaction in commercial records center. Furthermore researcher want to find out the overall service quality perceived by customers and which dimensions customers are satisfied with. Based on the revision made by Parasuraman, (2004) on the SERVQUAL model, researcher will adopt the 22-items to the study in order to identify the most important dimensions that matter most to customers and that bring them satisfaction.

Literature Analysis:

Commercial Records Center in Malaysia:

Records management originated from the United States of America in 1948 when the Hoover commission set up a task force headed by Emmett Leahy in response to the problem of managing the ever increasing volume of records in the world and USA in particular. The report of the task force was submitted to the commission on October 14, 1948 and was presented to congress in 1949. In the same vein, the committee set up in the United Kingdom led by Rt. Hon. Sir James Grigg, presented her report to Parliament in 1952. These among others played a significant role in establishing the concept of records management (Abioye, 2007).

National Archives Act 2003 gave the National Archives of Malaysia the needed authority to be responsible for the current records management in the public sector such as in process of appraisal and disposition, transferring records, destruction of records, and other. Day to day creation of records have growth tremendously. This responsibility becomes a big challenge to National Archives to make sure all the records effectively well managed. This situation only refers to the public records in a government sector. As we know private sector also play a main role in country development. They also created valuable records that must be maintain effectively. Many agencies and companies have elected to use commercial record centers for a long term solution to the problem of where to store and manage their records and information. The commercial records center industry has been assisting organizations in the management of records for several years.

The commercial records center industry still new in Malaysia. This CRC industry continued to develop, primarily in the Klang Valley and in other areas around the country. Based on the preliminary research that have been done there are about 10 commercial record center in Malaysia namely Crown Records Management Malaysia, Regalia Records Management Sdn Bhd, Supreme Record Centre Sdn. Bhd, PRISM Sdn. Bhd, Urban Record Center, Sure-Reach Records Management Sdn Bhd, Safeguards Corporation Berhad, AF Document Management Services Sdn Bhd, Storagetek Records Management (M) Sdn. Bhd, Dataworks Management Sdn Bhd.

In Malaysia for examples, Crown operates three Records Management Centres in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and in Johor. Crown Kuala Lumpur has recently expanded its storage facilities. The warehouse extension provides state of the art document management facilities with a capacity of over 700,000 cartons for their multi-national clients. Crown Penang has also expanded and moved into a thoroughly modern facility that no other relocation or records management company in Penang can match. Crown Penang now resides in a 9,000sq. ft. facility and has racking for 75,000 cartons while Johor branch resides on a 20,000 sq. ft. facility with the ability to manage up to 120,000 cartons.

Another example of Commercial Records Center are Regalia Records Management Sdn Bhd, it is the largest locally-owned Records Management Company in Malaysia. Their offer comprehensive and cost-effective records management solutions along with their expertise and experience to address the complex business challenges face by valued customers.

PAK Records Center (2013), Podraza, A (2011) and Sullivan, M (2012) concur that by using a commercial records centre facility, the organisation will is most likely to enjoy some of the 16 unchallenged benefits as follows: space cost savings, reduced operating costs, climate controlled environment, authorized and secure destruction, vital records protection, online backups , digital archives, security, protection against disaster, accessibility, facilities, web based interface, service capabilities, file management , improved productivity and labour efficiency.

Commercial Records Centres in the context of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction:

During the age of modern age everybody has seen that business is rapidly growing day by day and concerning with business there are always two parties called buyers and sellers, and buyers are concerned with quality, and sellers are always concerned with money. Today's world is dependent on business end engagements in at least three major activities. On this regards, many scholars have argued over this matter and said that the first activity is production, which involves making a product or providing a service. The second is manufacturing, where firms create products finally, customers purchase to satisfy needs, whereas service firms use the skills of employees to offer activities and assistance to satisfy customer needs. (Burrow & Everard 2004.) In the same sense Hernon (2001) argues that satisfaction and service quality provide a conceptual framework that should prove useful in understanding, thinking, and talking about service quality and customer satisfaction, what they are, how they are shaped, and how a subject can evolve to both internal, controllable forces and external, uncontrollable factors.

Overview of Customer Satisfaction and the Benefits:

Customer satisfaction is the result of the correlation between a customer's assumption and a customer's feelings. By way of explanation, customer satisfaction is identified as the distinction between assumed quality of service and the customer's involvement or feelings after having perceived the service. Customer satisfaction depends on such dimensions as assurance, responsiveness, reliability, empathy and tangibles, and further components such as personal, price and situational factors that may arise as the service quality. (Bateson & Hoffman 2000.) Customer satisfaction helps customers to communicate their needs straight to the sellers. Customer satisfaction is very important because it helps to learn about the business's strengths and weaknesses. Business holders can just know their strengths and weaknesses and make the progression. Not only this, also customer satisfaction also helps to appropriate resources for eventual strike or satisfaction. Furthermore, it supports to show calmness about making better quality of products and services to both the employees and the customers. It does not help to learn about strengths and weaknesses but helps it also to persuade competitive strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, it helps to benefit more vision into the sources of frustration and areas

desiring progression. At last, customer satisfaction helps to accommodate a system for informing management of problems or situations requiring actual promotion. (ICR 2011).

Service Quality:

Service quality has stood an importance for the hospitality industry. It has been identified as one of the most effective means of building a competitive position and improving organizational performance. Service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects the customer's perception of specific dimensions of service, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, Empathy, tangibles, satisfaction on other hand, is more inclusive: it is influenced by perceptions of service quality, product quality, and price as well as situational factors and personal factors. Service quality affects customer satisfaction by providing performance For example if we take an example of Mac Donald restaurants, then the consumers will get food service here, high quality everywhere the same they like to be in Mac Donald restaurants. It happens because of the high quality services. Customers today apprehend a very high general level of service in hospitality, tourism, and leisure. The accomplishment of competitors in these fields will thus be actuated by strategies concentrating on quality of services to add value, as argued to product or price differentiation. Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure focuses approaches and strategies that will augment the distribution of services, and supplies fair and understandable annotation of theoretical ideas and their practical operations. (Kandampully, Mok & Sparks 2001.)

SERVQUAL Model:

One service quality measurement model that has been extensively applied is the SERVQUAL Model developed by the Parasuraman. SERVQUAL is the most often used approach to measure service quality and to compare customers' expectations before a service encounter and their perceptions of the actual service delivered: The SERVQUAL instrument has been the predominant method used to measure consumers' perception of service quality. There are five generic dimensions or factors of SERVQUAL model as follows:

- i) *Tangibles*: Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel
- ii) *Reliability*: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- iii) *Responsiveness*: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- iv) *Assurance*: (Including competence, courtesy, credibility and security). Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- v) *Empathy*: (including access, communication, understanding the customer). Caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers.

The popularity of SERVQUAL with researchers can be explained mainly by its ease of use and by its adaptability to diverse service sectors.

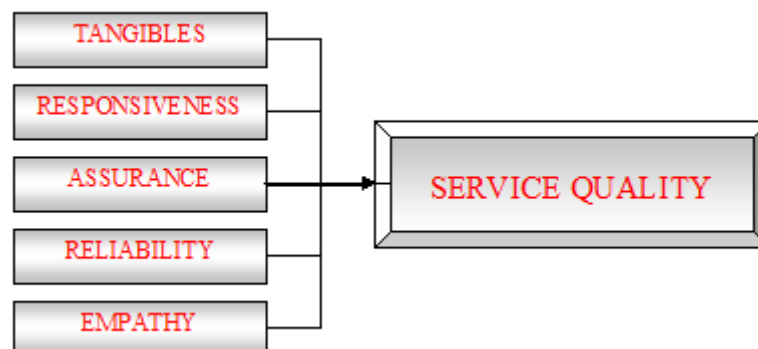


Fig. 2: SERVQUAL Model.

Benefits of service quality to the customers:

Customer service is one of the most important parts of any firms or business which has been globally adopted. Keeping the quality service as the forefront of their operations makes the company better and provides their customer with quality service as per their expectation. Some of the benefits according Hunter Taylor are:

- Increase the revenue
- Enhanced company reputation
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Customer Loyalty
- Engaged Employees

There are many advantage of being customer focused in the organization. The company can differentiate itself from the competitor and improve its image in the eyes of the customers. It also helps to minimize the price

sensitivity and improve profitability. There will be continuous improvements to the operation of the company if the company is customer centered. (The stairway consultancy, 2011, Customer care excellence)

Findings:

Service organisations have begun focusing on the customer perceptions of service quality because it helps in developing strategies that lead to customer satisfaction (Saravanan & Rao, 2007). The competition between the commercial records center companies mainly based on service pattern, service quality, and customers' expectation. Even though commercial records center companies offered the same product and services, being different and perform quality in terms of customer service compared to the other commercial records center is also can be one of the strategies to promote the consumers to prefer company that their attract. By offering quality and effective customer service plus with the product quality itself, it can make each of the commercial records center different from the other. Actually, when customer service meets or exceeds the customer expectations, the customer start to put confident and trust towards the company's abilities and thus inclined and willing to spend more money to use the company's products or services. This competition faced by these businesses has led them in seeking ways to be profitable through differentiating themselves in their activities. This is why there is a need for these CRC to measure service quality because some clients consider quality aspects of service when doing their contract engagement. This also will enable CRC to identify the key items of service quality by assessing the perceptions of clients and finding out which items or dimensions need improvements in case of any weaknesses.

Researchers realize that many research works have been carried in different service industries such as telecommunication, education, restaurants, banking, health care but very limited research has been carried to adopt the SERVQUAL model in the service setting (Abu, 2004). The researcher consider CRC as part of the service industry because they deal with records services to clients and in the course of managing this records they offer services in order to facilitate the records keeping experience of client. There are no study have been done in Malaysia regarding Commercial records center compared to other country such as Indonesia for example research done by Nanulaita (2001) on her studies to the PT Multifile Mitra Indonesia Commercial Records Center regarding the criteria or consideration in selecting suitable commercial records center by clients. The study also exposed that the clients choose the Commercial Records Center base on several factors such as security, Space, fee or charge, and services. Furthermore the research regarding commercial records center continued by Yudhawasthi, C. M. (2002) on her studies on five commercial records center in Jakarta, Bogor and Bekasi region, Indonesia. The researcher makes comparison between five different commercial records center regarding management of In-active records that focus on facility, services, fee, contract and staff.

Eko Mauladi (2006) stated that responsiveness is the most influence dimension that affects customer satisfaction followed by reliability from the other three dimensions. This is because the customer satisfied with the instant action and feedback response by Sigma Cipta Utama Commercial Records Center regarding service and product provided to them. Using the SERVQUAL model it can measures the level of customer satisfaction and services quality of Sigma Cipta Utama Commercial Records Center. This is why there is a need for CRC to measure service quality because some clients consider quality aspects of service when doing their contract engagement.

Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2006) stressed if an organization does not do market research on the topic of customer expectations, it may fail in providing customer requirements. Meanwhile Adock Dube, Dunwell Mukono & Rodreck David (2013) stressed that commercials records center industry has received little research attention from a service quality perspective. Because of that, researcher tries to adopt and study this issue on CRC in Malaysia practices. Knowledge of service quality assessments made by clients of Commercials records center would enable records managers to track their clients perceptions over time and to direct resources in areas which are important to them. Organization, institution and company are primary clients of Commercials records center and are becoming more conscious of their clients rights and of the gaps between their expectation of service delivery and the actual delivered service.

Significant and Contributions:

- There are no specifically standard or guideline regarding records management in CRC in Malaysia especially for private sector. There are only mentions in general on certain part in National Archives of Malaysia Act 2005 about handling records in records center. The findings of this study hopefully will contribute towards to the standardize of guideline that officially can be refer by Clients and CRCs itself.
- Service quality plays a critical role in the performance of the business and provides an important part in developing a competitive advantage. Therefore, the improvement in service quality will sustain effectiveness and induce long-term success for Commercials records center companies. The findings of this study will contribute towards the improvement of quality service delivered to customers, to identify existing problems and to ensure sustainability and induce long-term success within Commercials records center. Commercials records

center could then use the recommendations and develop strategies to adapt appropriate customer service techniques.

- The research could evoke awareness among records managers with regard to the opportunities and advantages of finding the gaps between the actual and perceived services delivered to clients. Although Harris (2003) points out that customer service is rare and that the average person and organization are unwilling to commit to spending money on research or to take action, this study could assist CRCs managers to convert negative perceptions to positive impressions. Consequently, clients will benefit from the improved outstanding customer service.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, knowing how consumers perceive service quality and being able to measure service quality can benefit management of commercial records center. Measuring service quality can help management provide reliable data that can be used to monitor and maintain improved service quality. Using the SERVQUAL model to assess service quality enables management to better understand the various dimensions and how they affect service quality and customer satisfaction. This will help them to identify those that have strengths and weaknesses and thereby make necessary improvements. Further research should be carried out in order to enhance the understanding of the concepts of service quality and customer satisfaction, how they are measured because they are very important for service commercial records center in terms of profitability and growth.

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