



UNDERSTANDING THE KEY DECISION MAKING FACTORS IN DOMESTIC COURIER SERVICES AT INDIA POST

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ABSTRACT

Service quality and customer satisfaction are very important concepts that companies must understand if they want to remain competitive and grow. In today's competitive environment delivering high quality service is the key for a sustainable competitive advantage. Customer satisfaction does have a positive effect on an organization's profitability. Satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business as customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchase, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth. A structured questionnaire was developed and was randomly distributed to the users to determine their satisfaction with service quality delivery. From the analysis carried out, it was found out that the overall service quality perceived by the customers was not satisfactory, that expectations were higher than perceptions. Customers were not satisfied with service. The results and findings will provide extra information concerning customers' needs, wants and their satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Customer Satisfaction, Organizations Profitability, Rock slopes, Rock Mass, Metallogenic and Mineralogenic.

INTRODUCTION

Literature Review

There are many factors that affect customer satisfaction. Such factors include friendly employees, courteous employees, knowledgeable employees, helpful employees, accuracy of billing, billing timeliness, competitive pricing, service quality, good value, billing clarity and quick service (Hokanson, 1995). A research conducted by Reichhold and Sasser (2002) of the Harvard Business School showed that, most customers are only profitable in the second year that they do business with you.

In the literature review concerning relationship marketing there are some definitions by some scholars. Berry (1986) thinks that "Relationship marketing is the attraction, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships. The marketing mind set is that the attraction of new customers is merely the first step in the marketing process" (pp 47-51). Gronroos (1994) defined it: "Relationship marketing is to identify and establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit, so that the objectives of all parties are met; and that this is done by mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises" (pp. 4-21). Relationship marketing is an approach that leads to a trusting rapport between the parties involved in business. It is not only important to get customers and create transactions, but also maintaining and enhancing ongoing relationships.

Researchers have tried to define customer satisfaction and in general they have defined it as transaction process. Oliver (1981) defined satisfaction "as a summary of psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience" (pp. 24). Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as:

"a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations". According to Hansemark and Albinsson (2004) "satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfillment of some need, goal or desire". Furthermore, researchers differentiate between attitude and satisfaction. So an attitude is a perceived service quality whereas, satisfaction is related to a specific transaction.

Oliver (1981) summarizes the transaction-specific nature of satisfaction, and differentiates it from attitude, as follows: Attitude is the consumer's relatively enduring affective orientation for a product, store, or process (e.g., customer service) while satisfaction is the emotional reaction following a disconfirmation experience which acts on the base attitude level and is consumption-specific. Parasuraman et al. (1988) distinguish service quality and satisfaction: "perceived service quality is a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service, whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction". Customer satisfaction as an attitude is like a judgment following a purchase act or based on series of consumer-product interactions (Yi, 1989).

Customers form their expectations from their past experience, friends' advice, and marketers' and competitors' information and promises (Kotler, 2000). Therefore, perceived service quality is viewed as the difference between consumers' perceptions and expectations for the service provided. Organizations in order to keep expectations from rising, they have to perform services properly from the first time (Parasuraman

et al. 1988). Thus, customer expectations for the service are likely to rise when the service is not performed as promised. Expectations serve as reference points in customer's assessment of performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Brown and Swartz (1989) think that customers prefer and value companies that provide high service quality. Thus, the attainment of quality in products and services has become a drive concern of the 1980s. Customers judge service quality relative to what they want by comparing their perceptions of service experiences with their expectations of what the service performance should be. Marketers described and measured only quality with tangible goods, where as quality in services was largely undefined and un-researched (Parasuraman, et.al. 1985)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research process is a series of systematic steps that are followed to solve a business problem. It is the framework or entire plan of action. It clearly describes crucial issues like the studies purpose and objectives' the type of data needed' the technique to be used for selecting samples' data collecting method, analyzing it' and other aspects that are essential for guiding business research. The methodology of the research was completely based on the field work i.e. collection of primary data from the General Post Office (GPO) in Kolkata and have to interview the people who used to come over there for sending their parcel letters or consignments via speed post or express parcel post or international parcel post.

The questionnaire was designed were different in case of Speed post, EPP & IPP respectively. It dealt with the issues of Key Decision maker for sending the post, customer satisfaction in case of delivery, behavior of the post office staff, ease of using track and trace services, complaint handling issues, availability of the basic facilities in the post offices like drinking water etc, satisfaction with the pricing system of the India Postal Services and also deriving the CODE SEC i.e. Code of the socio economic class of the people who are sending the posts. The photocopy of the questionnaires is provided along with this report.

The analysis was based on the analysis of the collection of primary data. The sample size was 90. 30 each for Domestic Speed post, Express parcel post and International parcel post respectively. The tools of statistical analysis used are Chi Square Test ,KMO , Bartlett Test and Factor Analysis, Scree Plot etc .

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Find out whether the Interaction Quality of the Staffs is related with Overall Quality of India Post.
2. Significant association between Adequate staffs and Queue Management?
3. Is there any significant association between Adequate staffs and Time Taken for Booking
4. Does Assurance of Delivery significantly related with Wideness of Network?
5. Whether there is any significant association between Adequacy of staffs and their Interaction Quality.
6. Overall Delivery quality and Overall quality of India Post, are these factor interrelated?

7. Whether there is any significant association between Charge Taken (comparing to other companies) and Service given against it.
8. Is Overall Quality related with Charge?
9. Is Recommendation given by a Consumer related with the Overall Quality of India Post?
10. Is Faster Delivery related with Charge taken by India Post?
11. Can Future Use of a Consumer be related with present Queue Management system of the post office?
12. Is Awareness of Track and Trace Service related with the Company Preference given by the consumers?
13. Whether there is any significant association/ association between Assured Delivery and Reliable for sending valuable goods.
14. Is Awareness of track and trace service related with Types of the consumers?

LIMITATIONS

The projects have gone through the some obstruction or hindrance that creates a negative effort on my project. For these reason some times very important information makes a difficulty for data collection process. The obstacles that have been faced by me are the following:

- An avoidance or unaccepted attitude observed by me from the customer during the data collection process at the store.
- Taking the subject too lightly by interviewee very often it has made a wrong approach towards my project.
- Sometimes customer did not give the actual idea what they gained from past experience or they had about the particular subject.
- Many consumers lose their patients due to the long questionnaire.
- Getting appointment with the corporate consumers was also trouble.
- Some times over observation/ interruption of TL during an interview hampers the customer's natural interest to answer.

FINDINGS AND ITS DISCUSSIONS

1. There is a significant association between Interaction Quality of PO-staffs and Overall Quality of India Post. Polite and gentle behavior of post office staffs may increase the efficiency as well as the overall quality of India Post. At the same time rude behavior put a very negative impact on the mind of the customers and those offended customer may not retain with India Post.
2. Queue Management and Adequate staff is related and around 60% of the consumers feel queue management is poor and 19% of them feel it is fair whereas only 22% (12+7+3) of them have given a positive feedback. Above mentioned statistic are clearly showing the efficiency of India Post in queue management. For most of the cases less number of counters and inadequacy of staffs are responsible for this. But, it is also true that there are customers who believe that the current staffs are not energetic enough.

3. There is no significant association between Adequate Staff and Time Taken for Booking.
i.e. time taken for booking is not depending on the no. of staff available in the Post office. Yes it is true that with a greater no. of booking counter will clear the line in lesser time but it will not increase the overall efficiency of PO staff and thus individual time taken to book a parcel will remain same.
4. There is a significant association between Assured Delivery and Widest Network.
Consumers have a mindset that wide area coverage increases the probability of delivery. They believe that some time it may take a little more time than promised but finally their parcel will be delivered.
5. There is a significant association between Adequate Staff and Interaction Quality of Staff. This is very interesting finding, it tells about human temperament. Here, we noticed that when there is less no. of staffs present in the Post Office the interaction quality of them becomes little rude and it happens due to extra work load.
6. There is a significant association between Overall Delivery quality and Overall quality of India Post. Delivery plays a great role in determining the overall quality of any postal service and India Post is no exception of this.
7. Services of India Post and overall quality provided by them are significantly associated with charge taken (comparing to other companies) by them. Monetary value of the service is very important. A large no. of customers believes that quality of the service of India Post is depending on the charge they are taking for that. Even, there are customers who believe some private courier service company will provide a better service than India Post just because they are charging higher.
8. There is a significant association between overall quality of India post and recommendation given by the customers. Those customers who positively rated the Overall quality of India Post were also ready to give recommendation to others.
9. There is a significant association between charge taken (comparing to other companies) and faster delivery. Now it is a peculiar mentality of majority of consumers that speed of the delivery is depending on the charge they are paying. In other words they believe that if they more, their parcel will reach the destination sooner.
10. There is a significant association between Queue Management and Future Use of a Customer. This is a very vital finding, other than quality of service, delivery quality etc., a large no. of customers considered queue management service in the post office as a parameter of future use. Which means considering other factor constant only queue management service itself can put a high impact on the business of India Post.
11. There is a significant association between Awareness of Track and Trace service and Customer Preference to India Post. Those customers who are aware of Track and Trace service have given their preference to India Post.

12. There is a significant association between Assured Delivery and Reliable for sending valuable goods. High probability of delivery motivates the consumers to use that medium for sending valuable goods like electronic items, costly medicines, antique items
13. There are few components which act independently and other component depends on those.
14. 60% of the customer found India Post is not reliable enough to send valuable items.

It is a painful fact that majority of consumers are rejecting a Govt. body and accepting some other Pvt. Companies to send their valuable items like mobile phones, electronic gadgets etc. So, India Post is losing its market share in this field.

CONCLUSIONS

- customers are considering “interaction quality of the staffs” as a parameter of “Overall Quality of India Post
- Increase in number of staff may improve the quality of queue management service.
- Time taken for booking is not depends on the number of staffs available in the Post Office rather it depends on the efficiency level of them.
- Wideness of network assures the delivery and delivery assurance gives confident to customers for sending valuable items.
- Interaction quality of staff may depends on the no of staffs employed to a job if no. of is less than the job requirement, staffs may lose their patients while interacting with the consumers.
- Overall quality of India Post highly related with the delivery service provided by them and recommendation made by the customers related to these two factors.
- Majority of consumers believes that services and overall quality is depending on the charge they are paying for it. They also believe that paying high price is directly related with faster delivery.
- Due to poor queue management many customers losing interest to come at the Post Office again. Around 60% of the consumers feel it is poor and 19% of them feel it is fair whereas only 22% (12+7+3) of them have given a positive feedback.
- It has derived that awareness of track and trace service influences the preference to the India Post.

Recommendations

- India post should increase number of staff at the post office
- India post should make better delivery service.
- India post should increase its overall quality to be market leader among the corporate sector also
- give better free pick up service and better booking procedure for corporate sector
- The interaction of staff with the customer should be better.
- Better queue management system needed in the post office
- Better basic facilities should be available in post offices like drinking water, seating arrangement.
- They have to change their defensive marketing strategy.

The key decision making factors in domestic courier services at India post

- Should advertise in TV and Print media to make everybody aware of their new services.
- Staffs of the PO should be energetic.
- They have to be very careful about the internal and external factors which effect their services significantly.
- Have to take immediate care of the factors headed under “factor/ services need immediate improvement” mentioned in this study.

Tables and Charts

Factor Analysis

To find out factors and services are in the same group

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.575
	Approx. Chi-Square	948.873
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	253
	Sig.	.000

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Overall_qlty	1.000	.899
Charge_compairing_to_other_co	1.000	.652
Service_given_against_charge	1.000	.847
India_post_is_market_leader	1.000	.632
Faster_delivery	1.000	.627
widest_network	1.000	.784
Customer_friendly	1.000	.600
Assured_delivery	1.000	.708
Reliable_for_sending_valuable_goods	1.000	.817
I_will_recommend_india_post_to_others	1.000	.733
I_will_use_it_in_future_again	1.000	.519
Overall_delivery	1.000	.844
Delivery_in_committed_timeline	1.000	.842
Updated_status	1.000	.846
Overall_booking_quality	1.000	.742
Time_taken_for_booking	1.000	.713
Ease_of_understanding_the_declaration_form	1.000	.418
Last_experience_in_the_po	1.000	.896
Finding_branch	1.000	.681
Que_management	1.000	.831
Basic_facilities_like_water	1.000	.764
Adequate_staff	1.000	.701
Interaction_quality_of_the_staff		.608

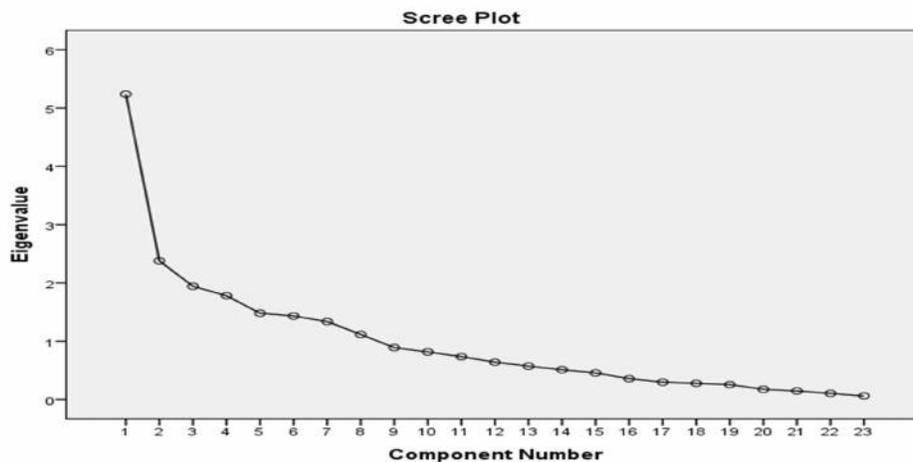
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.237	22.770	22.770	5.237	22.770	22.770	3.092	13.445	13.445
2	2.378	10.337	33.107	2.378	10.337	33.107	2.702	11.749	25.194
3	1.942	8.445	41.552	1.942	8.445	41.552	2.186	9.504	34.698
4	1.781	7.742	49.295	1.781	7.742	49.295	2.148	9.341	44.039
5	1.481	6.439	55.734	1.481	6.439	55.734	1.804	7.844	51.883
6	1.433	6.229	61.963	1.433	6.229	61.963	1.743	7.580	59.462
7	1.337	5.814	67.777	1.337	5.814	67.777	1.709	7.431	66.893
8	1.116	4.851	72.628	1.116	4.851	72.628	1.319	5.735	72.628
9	.891	3.872	76.500						
10	.816	3.548	80.048						
11	.735	3.196	83.245						
12	.641	2.786	86.030						
13	.572	2.488	88.518						
14	.512	2.224	90.742						
15	.456	1.982	92.725						
16	.358	1.556	94.280						
17	.297	1.291	95.572						
18	.277	1.206	96.777						
19	.255	1.110	97.887						
20	.174	.758	98.646						
21	.146	.635	99.281						
22	.105	.455	99.735						
23	.061	.265	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Interpretation: From the Total Variance table we identified 8 independent components which means other components are depends on these 8 components.



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