

AN ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF SOUTH WOLLO CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

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Abstract : Every organization's success depends on its keeping customers satisfied with the goods or services that it offers, yet most executives tend to view the customer service function of their business as little more than a necessary nuisance. (John A, Goodman,2009)

Service provision of public sector organizations in developing countries is not in a position of achieving customer's satisfaction. This is true in Ethiopia. The main challenge of public sector organization of Ethiopia is delivering services in an efficient and effective manner. Hence customer satisfaction with service delivery of public sector organizations has not been maintained.

I. INTRODUCTION

As sdsp(2001) stated, there are several problems that contributed to poor service delivery in the Ethiopian civil service. The major problems include:

- i. Positive attitude towards public service has not developed to the desired extent;
 - ii. Insufficient recognition that citizens have rights to perceive services from governments;
 - iii. Lack of accountability in civil service institutions for failure to meet expected performances;
 - iv. Service delivery in many public institutions are based on long and time consuming, excessively hierarchical organizational structure obsolete management practices;
 - v. Services are in most cases provided in a manner that suits the administrative convenience of the providers rather than meet the needs of the recipients;
 - vi. Civil service institutions tend to concentrate more on concerns for inputs and routine activates that on achieving tangible outputs by way of implementing government policies and programs as well as improving services;
 - vii. The public is seldom given clear and adequate information on the availability of particular services and the conditions required to get these services;
 - viii. Civil service institutions are sole providers of some services
 - ix. Most of the institutions do not have any formally constituted complaints handling mechanisms;
 - x. Service delivery improvement is not given sufficient attention in the planning process of government institutions;
 - xi. In many cases the level of imitative and commitment to improve services leaves much to be desired;
 - xii. Shortage of resources constrains improvement of services to the desired level;
 - xiii. Inconsistency of regulations and guidelines governing institutions that provide related services as well as lack of coordination and cooperation among various departments within an institution and between related institutions often hamper efficiency in service delivery;
 - xiv. Human resource management system and conditions of work in the civil service do not motivate employees to provide quality service;
 - xv. Service users and often unaware of their right and obligations pertaining to services and at times tend to resort to illicit means to get the services;
- As a result of these and other problems, the civil service has so far not been able to effectively carryout government policies and programs as well as to organize and delivery cost effective services. Consequently, its role in promoting economic and social development remains limited. Besides, the fact that the civil service, on several occasions, has not been able to properly address the rights of service users to get public services in a fair equitable manner has contributed to the prevailing negative perception among the public about the efficiency of government institutions and civil servants.

Few years after the downfall of the military government, the new Ethiopian government recognized the importance of improving the performance of service delivery and the creation of accountable and responsible civil service institutions that would support the development efforts in the country. (Tsfaye, 2009)

To meet the need for a responsive public service that will meet customer's needs, the Ethiopian government has already taken several measures in order to improve public quality service and to increase customer satisfaction. Among these are Business process reengineering (BPR), Balanced score card. (BSC), Civil service change army and Good governance packages. But, still now service delivery of public institutions of Ethiopia in general and in south wollo civil service department in particular, has not much improved as expected.

This paper focus on the state of service delivery of public institutions of south wollo administrative zone, particularly, civil service department. Service delivery should be assessed so as to know the level of customer satisfaction with the service delivery of public institutions and to identify the factors that leads to customer's dissatisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess customer satisfaction with quality service delivery in South wollo Administrative zone Civil service department.

Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate the standards of service delivery.
2. To identify factors that determine quality service delivery that leads to customer's satisfaction.
3. To investigate the effect of quality service delivery on customer's satisfaction.
4. To examine the extent of customer's satisfaction with quality service delivery.

II. OVER VIEW OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

A customer is anyone who receives products or services; customers can be internal or external to the organization and are the foundation of any business.(Fogli,2006) Customer service is the interaction between the customer and a representative of the organization and is not limited to a single function or job type within the organization.(Ibid:4)

Customer service is viewed separately from product quality.The distinction between services and products (Albrecht and Zemke, 1985; Bowen and Schneider, 1988 Fogli 2006) is a well-researched and frequently discussed concept.

Three important dimensions of service distinguish it from products:

*Intangibility:*Customers must experience the service to really know it. Service itself is intangible, although it can be provided in support of a tangible product, and documentation of service (receipts, account summaries, and reports, for example) can be tangibly provided.

*Simultaneous delivery:*Service does not exist before it is delivered, and it cannot be stored for future use. Unlike a physical product, service cannot be placed in inventory or recalled if performed improperly.

*Customer participation:*Customers are present for, and often participate, in their own services. Service delivered to customers varies more from customer to customer than product quality, in part because of the customer's role in the delivery process. Both the customer and the service provider react to verbal and sometimes physical cues provided by the other. As a participant, the customer can facilitate or impede the delivery of service.

An interesting consideration in the delivery of customer service lies in the difference between internal and external customers. In most discussions of customer service, the customer is perceived to be external to the organization. While external customers are, by definition, persons outside the organization, internal customers are employees who work for the same organization and depend on each other to carry out their work (Johnston, 1999 in Stephanie 2006:9)

Concept of Customers Satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction has been defined in various ways by different schoolars. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) suggested that customer satisfaction is a function of the customer's assessment of service quality, product quality and price. Oliva, Oliver and Bearden (1995) suggested that satisfaction is a function of product performance relative to consumer expectations. Bachelet (1995) considered satisfaction to be an emotional reaction by the consumer in response to an experience with a product or service. He believed that this definition included the last contact with a product or service, the satisfaction experience since the time of purchase as well as the general satisfaction experienced by regular users. Hill (1996) defined customer satisfaction as the customers' perceptions that a supplier has met or exceeded their expectations. Jones and Sasser (1995) defined customer satisfaction by identifying four factors they postulated affected it. The factors were: (1) essential elements of the product or service that customers expected all rivals to deliver, (2) basic support services such as customer assistance, (3) a recovery process to make up for bad experiences and (4) "customisation" which were factors that met customers' personal preferences, values, or needs.

The Relation Between service quality and customer satisfaction

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has received considerable academic attention in the past few years. . Many researchers have operationalized customer satisfaction by using a single term scale and many others have used multiple item scales. Service quality and customer satisfaction has been investigated, and results have shown that the two constructs are indeed independent, but are closely related, implying that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in the other (Suresh chandra, Chandrasekharan and Anantharaman, 2002).

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), satisfaction and service quality are fundamentally different in terms of their underlying causes and outcomes. Although they have certain things in common, satisfaction is generally viewed as a broader concept, whereas service quality assessment focuses specifically on dimensions of service. Service quality is a component of customer satisfaction.

Service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects the customer's perception of elements of service such as interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. These elements are in turn evaluated based on specific quality dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Satisfaction, on the other hand, is more inclusive: it is influenced by perceptions of service quality, product quality, and price so well so situational factors and personal factors.

Service Quality is commonly noted as a critical prerequisite for establishing and sustaining satisfying relationship with valued customers. In this way, the association between service quality and customer satisfaction has emerged as a topic of significant and strategic concern (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). In general, perceived service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction (Spreng and Mckoy, 1996). Thus, a proper understanding of the antecedents and determinants of customer satisfaction can be seen as to have an extraordinarily high monetary value for service organization in a competitive environment (Lassar, Manolis and Winsor, 2002).

Service Delivery Policy in the Civil Service in Ethiopia

The Public Service Delivery Improvement Policy (PSIP) was adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2001. Most federal civil service reform offices have established Customer Services and Complaints Handling Units and prepared service standards. The significance of the PSIP as a civil service-wide performance management system (including, the focus on self-scrutiny for attitudinal change, business process reengineering and restructuring); has been recognized by the Government of Ethiopia as critical to addressing implementation bottlenecks. Five key federal ministries (the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Revenue, Ministry of Transport and Communication, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) together with their affiliated organizations have already undertaken service improvement measures on critical service areas to bring about immediate results, resulting in, among other things, the much reduced service times for business licensing and customs clearances.(MoFED,2006)

According to FDRE service delivery policy in the civil service -2001,the need, scope and objectives of the policy are mentioned here under below:

The Need for Policy

The state of service delivery in civil service institutions calls for fundamental changes. The government is committed to bring about such an improvement. Thus, the service delivery policy is the first step to realize such government commitment. The policy is specifically designed to:

- i. Create awareness among civil service institutions and the general public about government intentions and expectations regarding service delivery and quality and quality of services.
- ii. Publicize the rights and obligations of both service providers and recipients:
- iii. Encourage and promote service delivery improvement throughout the civil service;
- iv. Encourage continuing improvement in service delivery.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For this study, descriptive survey method will be used to assess customer satisfaction with quality service delivery in South wollo Administrative zone Civil service department.

3.2 Research Approach

The research will use both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The main reason to use qualitative approach is to describe and explain the theoretical aspects of service delivery and customer satisfaction. Quantitative approach will also be utilized to understand the existing service delivery and customer satisfaction in numbers which will be expressed in terms of table, figure, pie chart, correlation, regression and percentage.

3.3 Population And Sampling Size With Sampling Technique

3.3.1 Population

The head and staff of the civil service department and all clients who have accessed to the services of SWCSD will be taken as population of the study.

3.3.2 Sample Size

The researcher should determine the sample size to address the research topic. The total sample size will include 200 respondents from which heads office and work process coordinators that frequently used the services of the research area. In addition to this individual service users will be included in the sample.

3.3.3 Sampling techniques

For this research, both probability and non-probability sampling method will be employed. In this study, simple random sampling method will be employed to select the respondents, who will have equal chance of being selected among the customers. Head offices of different public sector organizations and staff of SWCSD will be selected purposively. The reason for using purposive sampling technique will be used based on the assumption that those respondents will have more information and knowledge in the study area of service provision.

IV. SOURCES OF DATA

Data and information for this study will be obtained from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources include the staff, clients and head offices of public institutions. From these primary sources, data will be collected by using the following data collection tools: such as questionnaires and personal interview. Whereas secondary sources from which the researcher will collect valuable information from both published and non-published sources that include books from libraries, magazines, governmental policy documents, journals, web-site information, document and internet.

V. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

For this study, primary data was collected by using three methods. Those were questionnaires, personal interviews and field observation.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Both open and closed ended questions used. This is because; open ended questions provide open entrance for respondents to respond the answer what they think as right. However, closed ended questions employed in some other cases, as they allow researchers to be free from bias and as they are easy for calculation.

3.5.2 Interviews

Semi structured face to face interviews has applied for employees and officials. This is because, semi structured interviews have two advantages. The first one is that they allow respondents to respond what they think to be right and allows the researcher to ask

based on the responses of the respondents and again if it is required more clarification the interviewer can provide for ambiguous questions.

3.5.3. Documentary Research

The researcher has collected secondary data from official documents, such as policy, rule and regulation, reports, strategic plan and other documents related to study issue.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

After collection of the research data analysis and interpretation will follow. The analyses of the collected information from the different sources are organized into their representative categories so as to come up with logical results. In dealing with the qualitative analysis based on the evidence collected from the different sources, an effort will be made to carefully understand and interpret the information to use it together with the quantitative data. The collected data will be categorized and tabulated using tables and graphs. Then, the tabulated data will be analyzed using different statistical tools like regression and correlation tests will be conducted. Percentages and frequency distribution will also be used to analyze the profile of the respondents and to determine the proportion of respondents choosing various responses.

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