

Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Organizational Growth

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ABSTRACT

Service quality and customer satisfaction are two very important concepts which plays crucial roles in organizational management and sustenance. The operating environments as well as high levels of competition are forces that are compelling organizational managers to adhere strictly to excellent services in order to achieve high level of customer satisfaction. Expectations in most cases do not match realities in terms of product quality and the services therein and organizational managers lacking behind in this often feel the impacts on their financial bottom line. This paper among others recommends total overhaul of the service qualities in all tiers of marketing management to ensure unmatched satisfaction thereby creating bigger market share.

Key words: Service, Quality, Perceived value, Customer Satisfaction, Recommendation to others.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

A number of organization function based on the belief that a certain level of quality once attained requires no further advancements. These organizations tend to ignore the perceptions of customers about service quality but still desire to achieve positive corporate image. Empirical research has overwhelmingly shown that the ability of organizations to perform reliably would in the long run enhance customer's perceived value of a service. This implies that in order to increase the extent of customers perceived value, the organization must offer quality services to its customers. In the pursuit of higher profit and lower costs, organizations focus on less important issues and *'fail to do things right the first time'* and hence do not provide quality service to their customers. It is therefore pertinent to determine the effect of service quality on perceived value. One definition of service quality states that quality is simply conformance to specifications which would mean that positive quality is when a product or service meet or exceed preset standards or promises, (Ekinci et al., 2004). These expectations emphasize the fact that service requires both tangible and intangible aspects in order to ensure customer satisfaction. The unawareness of most managers about the relationship between customer's expectation and perceptions regarding service quality affects their satisfaction. Businesses in Nigeria usually face the problem of poor service quality. It is the responsibility of the top echelon of the organization to ensure that organization provides quality service which would lead to customer satisfaction. This has motivated an effort on this research to

demonstrate the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction. It has been observed that customer satisfaction is positively related to recommendation to others. Research shows that customers who are satisfied with the quality of services offered by the company tend to use word of mouth referrals as means to evaluate the suppliers of those services. However, the problem with most organizations is their inability to provide individualized attention to their customers. Where this problem exists, the organization is not able to satisfy its customer base and therefore negative disparagements are suggested about the company. It is therefore imperative to study the link between customer satisfaction and recommendation to others. Finally, some organizations assume that their customers may provide positive recommendations about their services without actually providing them with quality services. This is a wrong and unfair assumption because in order to receive positive feedbacks and recommendations, the quality of the services provided must be at its optimum. Past experiences over the years has led to the conclusion that quality is everything. This constitutes a problem for organizations that expect positive recommendations but provide poor services. It is therefore expedient that this research attempts to analyze the impact of service quality and recommend steps to others. This study sets out to investigate the relationship between service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction with a view to determining the relationship between service quality and perceived value as well as to examine the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Service quality comprises of two words: service and quality. Service can be defined from the economic point of view as an intangible commodity or intangible equivalent of economic goods. Definitions of service quality revolve around the idea that it is the result the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perception of the way the service has been performed (Lewis and Booms, 1983; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982; Gronroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994). Scholars have defined the concept of service in different ways. Most often activities, deeds, processes and interactions are used when defining the concept of service (Solomon et., al 1985; Lovelock, 1991; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Lovelock (1991) defines service as ‘a process or performance rather than a thing’. Quality refers to the non-inferiority or superiority of something. It can also be defined as fitness for purpose. Service quality is a methodology to manage business processes in order to guarantee customer satisfaction. Quality in service is very important especially for growth and development of service sector business enterprises (Powell, 1995). It works as an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Ruyter and Bloemer, 1995). Parasuraman et al., (1985) and Zeithaml et al., (1990) noted that the key strategy for the success and survival of any business institution is the deliverance of quality service to customers. Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature because of the difficulties in both defining and measuring it with no overall consensus emerging on either (Wisniewski, 2001). When an experience exceeds customers’ expectation, there is believed to be affirmative disconfirmation of the expectation and a beneficial customer evaluation is projected. Service quality is defined similarly as a comparative function between customer expectations and actual service performance (Parasuraman et., al, 1985). Service quality has so far been viewed as a cognitive evaluation of the performance of a service or a service provider (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Oliver 1997). Service quality can be defined from at least four perspectives:

- *Excellence*: the characteristics of excellence may vary intensely and quickly.
- *Value*: it encompasses numerous characteristics; however, quality and value are separate constructs. One the opinion of meeting or surpassing expectations and the other emphasizing the advantage to the beneficiary.
- *Conformance to specifications*: it aids exact measurement.

- *Meeting and/or exceeding expectations:* this definition is comprehensive and is relevant in all service industries however, expectations change and may be formed by experiences with other service providers.

Characteristics of Service

Basically, services differ from products. The specific features exclusive to services include:

Intangibility: It refers to the perception of a service's characteristics before and after it is performed. Services are essentially intangible. Unlike products that can be exhibited in a store for customers to see, feel or touch before concluding whether or not to buy, you cannot touch, see or feel services before making decisions, even though you can make some evaluations from past experience, word of mouth or personal recommendation. Compared to the physical product, customers encounter and perceive an extreme degree of risk and uncertainty when purchasing a service product due to service intangibility, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of services (Wolak et al., 1998). This is the major threat to the service quality and customer acceptance sequentially (Dudu, & Agwu, 2014). The intangible feature of service poses a problem for customers. The intangibility of services apparently increases customers risk, (Flipo, 1988), anxiety (Rushton and Carson, 1989) and uncertain perception in various stages of the decision-making process (Trivedi and Morgan, 2003). This may consequently result in a negative attitude towards the services (Rushton and Carson, 1989). The marketing implications of intangibility of service include:

- special pricing knowledge
- Ingenious communication skills
- Technical originality and continuous vision in new service development.

Inseparability: In service marketing, the basic feature is the close link between service provision, provider and the service consumption and consumer. It also refers to the concurrence of production and consumption of services i.e production and consumption occurs at the same time. Erramilli (1990) discusses that the "inseparability of service" is the factor that is responsible for the distinguishing entry behavior in the service and manufacturing sector. The marketing implications of inseparability of service include:

- Difficulty in the mass production of services.
- Insignificant economies earned from the centralization of operations.
- Service quality is determined by what happens in real time.
- The service provider would require immense expertise to train customers on their roles in the service and delivery process.
- The service provider would require skills to confront interference in the servuction process caused by problem customers.

Heterogeneity: It refers to the possibility of service inconsistency in the performance and quality of services instigated by the relations between the service employee and the customer. Variability in service performance is essentially the case with labor intensive services. In the manufacturing and marketing of products, companies can meticulously ensure uniformity in quality, packaging and product features. However, since the delivery of services requires a large degree of human elements, it would be challenging for both the supplier and consumer to guarantee uniform "product" or quality of service. The marketing implications of heterogeneity of service include:

- The need to develop service blueprints, (Stostack, 1977).
- The need for a procedure of timely service recovery.
- Dexterous selection and motivation of suitable front-line employees.

Perishability: This is one of the most difficult characteristic of service to appreciate. This is because services are extremely perishable when compared with products. Nonetheless, how can services be regarded as more perishable than products? It is justified by the fact that the services cannot be

stored, saved, resold or returned. It is lost indefinitely when not utilized. The marketing implications of perishability of service include:

- The need for evolving a perfect demand forecasting mechanism.
- The need for an ingenious plan for capacity utilization.
- The need for the execution of strategies and actions to accommodate dissatisfied customers from non-redeemable services.

Dimensions of Service Quality

Whereas service quality is known to be based on multiple dimensions (Gronroos, 1982, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1985) there is no general agreement as to the nature or the content of the dimensions (Brady and Cronin, 2001). Several dimensions of service quality have been defined by different scholars some of which includes:

1. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) defined service quality in terms of:

- *Physical quality*: this relates to the tangible aspects of the service. It comprises the physical environment and instruments.
- *Interactive quality*: this refers to the two way flow that exists between the service provider and the customer including programmed and animated interactions. It stems from whether the service provider's association style matches the customer's participation style.
- *Corporate quality*: it denotes the concept attributed to a service provider both by its potential and current customers and also other publics. It is the assessment of corporate image.

2. According to Gronroos (1984), customers' perceptions of service process are divided into two dimensions:

- *Technical quality*: it refers to the outcome dimension or "what" service is provided. The customer recognizes the result of the process in which the resources are utilized.
- *Functional quality*: it refers to the process dimension or "how" the service is provided. The customer recognizes how the process functions.

3. Parasuraman et al., (1985) defined service quality through ten dimensions which they summed up into five in 1988. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) have identified five dimensions of service quality: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

- *Tangibility*: the form of physical amenities, personnel and materials. Tangibility is the service dimension that makes a product or service practical and usable for customers (Alrousan, 2011; Dudu, & Agwu, 2014).
- *Reliability*: the ability to carry out the guaranteed service dependably and accurately. It is the capacity of a service supplier to quickly provide quality service. Observing service delivery contracts, pricing and complaints handling are all important for a business (Alrousan, 2011; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Tat and Reymound, 1988).
- *Responsiveness*: the willingness to assist customers and deliver prompt services. It is the pleasantness to assist customers provide immediate service right after a demand is made.
- *Assurance*: the expertise and the courteousness of employees and their capability to encourage trust and confidence. It is the ability to stimulate trust and confidence of the product or service provided.
- *Empathy*: it refers to the caring, personalized attention that an organization gives to its customers. It emphasizes the interaction of customers as individualized.

Approaches to the Improvement of Service Quality

Generally, an advancement in service design and delivery helps to increase the standard of service quality. Various techniques can be used to improve service quality and they include:

Statistical approach

There are two apparent approaches in the use of statistical method to improve service quality and they include:

- Production approach: it uses conventional statistical quality control tools. It has restrictions in service because objective direct real time measures of basic services features are seldom achieved, managers therefore have a tendency to perform subjective results of customer surveys.
- Marketing approach: it develops the social science tool box.
- The production and marketing approach can be characterized using the four approaches to defining quality as described by Garvin (1984).
- Manufacturing-based approach: Quality corresponds to predefined prerequisites, where deviation from the prerequisites is a decline in quality.
- Product-based approach: Quality is indicated in the occurrence or non-occurrence of product attributes. The customers put side by side the features of product from the same product group and base them according to their perceived quality.
- User-based approach: Customers ascertain quality in relation to products' fitness for use. Products that really satisfy customers' needs are those with the ultimate quality. This approach is biased because suitability for use of the same product can be viewed differently by different customers.
- Value-based approach quality is appraised by assessing sacrifices and benefits. A quality product corresponds to prerequisites at a tolerable cost.
- Garvin identified a fifth approach: Transcendent or Philosophical approach which suggests that quality cannot be defined accurately but can only be identified through experience.

Production approach

- Quality standards in the structure of the production approach. Quality standards can be expressed as follows:
 - In monetary terms
 - In non-monetary terms.
- Toolbox of observational studies: Observational studies develop on the application of the basic statistical toolbox consists of seven tools. Ease of use is the power and common feature of these seven tools.
- Toolbox of inferential studies: Inferential studies develop on the use of the extended statistical toolbox with the aim of preventing faults in services due to poor design. Design of experiments should be used to ascertain how variations in service design affect service delivery and service quality.

Marketing approach

Quality standards in the framework of the marketing approach: The marketing approach concentrates on the customer judgment of their service experience (Dudu, & Agwu, 2014). The focus is on the analysis of quality features and of overall quality. Willingness to pay deserves less attention. Just like the production approach, quality standards in the structure of the marketing approach can be expressed in non-monetary or monetary terms. In analyzing quality standards in non-monetary terms, there is little allowance to prevent the highly subjective customer expectations formed through:

- a. *Search attributes*: they are ascertained and analyzed before the service is delivered. These usually comprises the tangible aspects of a service, are physically visible, and more related to equipment than to the person delivering a service. Price is an essential search attribute in the service setting.
- b. *Experience attributes*: they are experienced either during the conduct or shortly after service delivery. These include characteristics such as taste or duration of well-being.
- c. *Belief attributes*: they may be impossible to analyze even a long time after service delivery. Few customers have medical or mechanical skills adequate to evaluate whether these services are or were important and performed in an adequate manner.

Product based approach:

Service attributes can be analyzed using any of the following methods:

- **Rating scales**: Service features are often analyzed using rating scales. The most commonly used and most carefully analyzed rating scale is SERVQUAL (Service Quality). The model defines quality as the disparity between customer perceptions and expectations with respect to quality of delivered service. Respondents are required to answer two sets of questions relating to the same subject, the first set at a general level and one for a company of interest.
- **Penalty or Reward analysis**: this method of analysis was developed by Brandt (1987, 1988), which aims at the identification of service features whose absence can either reduce or increase service value in the sight of potential customers. Desirable features which are not included as part of a service cause customer dissatisfaction. The same can be stated for undesirable features which are part of a service. These are therefore known as penalty factors. Reward factors, on the other hand, are those features which allow a provider to exceed customer expectations. They are also known as delighters, they are responsible for higher perceived quality, and consequently also increased customer satisfaction.
- **Vignette method**: The vignette method is also known as the factorial survey approach. It is not well-known and was developed by Rossi and Anderson (1982) based on conjoint analysis. A fundamental idea in conjoint analysis is that any service can be divided into a set of relevant features. By defining services as collections of attributes, it is possible to establish some vignettes, fictitious combinations of chosen features. It is an efficient method to assess a wide variety of service design options from a simulation of the actual customer behavior in purchase decision-making. One drawback of the vignette method is the requirement that the target segment.

User-based approach

Methods used within the framework of the user-based approach include:

- **Critical incident technique**: This is a systematic process for recording situations and attitudes that are observed to result in success or failure on a specific task. It focuses on a survey of customer experiences that were observed either as extremely positive or extremely negative. Under this method, data are collected through structured, open-ended questions, and the results are analyzed based on its content. Respondents are required to report certain events from the not too distant past (6–12 months). These provide full information of firsthand experiences of customers.
- **Analysis of complaints**: This method is also known as the basis of complaint management, which is widespread in service industries and are basically about recognizing service failure and making an attempt to achieve service recovery. The basic issue is to use the opportunity that arises if the company is informed about a service failure, since the company's reaction has the tendency to both replenish customer satisfaction and reinforce loyalty or to exacerbate the situation and push the

customer to a competing firm. Analysis of complaints focuses on the analysis of unsolicited or solicited negative customer feedback. Unsolicited feedback can be described as the most immediate source of customer service evaluation that quickly specifies reasons for customer dissatisfaction. Complaints received either in person, by mail, phone, fax or on-line should be registered for future analysis. Although only a restricted amount of data is available from these usually highly standardized sources, data can usually be classified into usable classifications and analyzed to show trends over a period. One of the weaknesses to the analysis of complaints and comment cards is that it shows opinions of only those customers who make up their minds to communicate with the company. To get a more objective evaluation of complaints, a customer survey should be undertaken using a representative sample of customers, (Dudu, & Agwu, 2014).

- **Analysis of contacts:** This method is a relatively new method that focuses on blueprinting. A service blueprint shows steps in the service process which makes it similar to a flowchart. The basic difference between service blueprint and flowchart is the greater detail used in a service blueprint in relation to the graphical presentation of activities carried out to provide a service. A service blueprint comprises of estimates of the time required for each activity, an indication of activities that necessitate customer contact, and an identification of activities where a service failure might occur. Service blueprinting is usually used within the structure of the operations management. The use of service blueprints is especially necessary with regard to the analysis of (customer) contacts, (Icha, & Agwu, 2015).

Mystery shopping: It has been growing popular in the service setting. The main concept of this method is to examine the process (es) under study from the outside and evaluate their efficiency from a number of viewpoints:

- **The checker:** This is a specially trained employee of the company has the benefit of being acquainted with the company's service requirements. The drawback in the use of checkers as mystery shoppers is the fact that they might be seen as such, for they unintentionally act contrarily from typical customers and may aggravate the observer effect. An additional threat is company blindness. This occurs if checkers are only able to account for the company's internal evaluation criteria, while they are either completely ignoring, or ignorant of, both standards of competition and customer expectations.
- **The expert:** Their tests are very much regarded by the public, for experts are (or should be) acquainted with standards of the competition and also general industry requirements. The basic inhibition to expert tests is the fact that experts do not essentially belong to the customer segment the company concentrates on, and may have varying expectations than the typical customer.
- **The customer:** Evaluators chosen to act the part of customers usually fit the socio-demographic or psychographic group outline for the customer segment(s) on which the company concentrates. The major drawback of this approach is customers' lack of know-how. To counterpoise it, companies normally organize elementary training sessions, (Dudu, & Agwu, 2014)

Value-based approach:

At the center of the readiness-to-pay idea is a evaluation between service benefits and the sacrifices essential to obtain the service. This trade-off is used as the foundation for quality assessment. There are three main ways to measure service quality within the framework of this approach. In the first, every service benefit is allocated a utility U_i , which is then immediately compared with the price p_i in the quotient $h_i = p_i/U_i$. This system only makes sense if the customer is able to select among

numerous available quotients, looking for the smallest one in the process. A single isolated quotient is of no value. In the second, price is seen as one of the quality features. In the conjoint analysis structure, a series of two-feature comparisons can then be carried out to discover existing customer predilections and assign them proper weights. In the third, respondents are given with a number of vignettes. Apart from asking them how they would assess a given combination of service features; they are also asked: what is the maximum price they would be ready to pay for this combination of features. This information assists in defining customer acceptance limits for the cost–benefit ratio.

The third possibility seems to be of the highest practical value.

Service Quality Perception

It refers to the customer's overall judgment of the required of the service delivery process. Perceived service quality is defined as “the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority” (Zeithaml, 1988). According to (Juran 1988) quality consists of two primary elements:

- to what degree a product or service meets the needs of the consumers; and
- to what degree a product or service is free from deficiencies

Customer perception of service quality is determined by the nature of inconsistency between the expected service and the perceived service by the customer. In a situation where the expected service is greater than the actual service, there is a less than satisfactory service quality. Where the difference between the expected and perceived services escalates, service quality becomes unsatisfactory. In circumstances where perceived service is greater than expected service, service quality perception is more satisfactory and will lead to an ideal quality. Where perceived service quality equals expected service quality, service quality is satisfactory. Mathematically, we can say: Service Quality (SQ) = Performance (P) – Expectation (E). This provides the required knowledge to service providers for evaluating service quality levels.

SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Service quality management is an essential part of the management of services. The basic aim of service quality management is confirming that services’ correspond with quality standards demanded or expected by the clients, customer orientation. Service quality management is knowledge-based, it depends on people’s constant development, network-intense cooperation and value co-creation to obtain viable competitive advantage.

There are eight principles of quality management which include:

Principle 1: Customer focus: Organizations rely on their customers and for that reason they should understand present and upcoming customer needs, should sustain customer requirements and endeavor to surpass customer expectations.

Principle 2: Leadership: Leaders create unity of purpose and focus for the organization. They have a duty to establish and sustain the internal environment so that people can become entirely involved in accomplishing the organization's objectives.

Principle 3: Involvement of people: People at all levels are the lifeblood of an organization and their maximum participation enables their capacities to be used to the organization's advantage.

Principle 4: Process approach: An anticipated result is reached more efficiently when actions and associated resources are managed as a process.

Principle 5: System approach to management: In accomplishing an organization’s objective, Identifying, understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system contributes to its effectiveness and efficiency.

Principle 6: Continual improvement: Continuous advancement in an organization's overall performance should be a constant objective of the organization.

Principle 7: Factual approach to decision making: Effective decisions are dependent on the analysis of data and information.

Principle 8: Mutually beneficial supplier relationships: A firm and its suppliers are interdependent and a symbiotic relationship improves their capacity to create value.

Service Quality Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of determining if the expectation of the customer has been achieved or the standard established by the company has been met. The inputs required in evaluating service quality include:

- Core staff: This comprises of: a team leader, technical staff, and administration staff. Their basic functions are to conduct training and monitor and evaluate courses.
- Simple evaluation plan: It comprises of a rationale (reason for evaluation), objective (what to realize), methodology (the method, design and tools to be used), plan of activities and budgetary requirement.
- Alternative evaluation techniques and tools: It consists of informal evaluation techniques (precise experience, casual conversation) and formal evaluation techniques (observation and focus group discussion).
- Determination of steps in measuring service quality.

Concept of Customer Satisfaction

This encompasses the description of the concepts associated with customer satisfaction with the aim of facilitating the comprehension of what customer satisfaction is, issues such as the meaning of customer satisfaction, who is a customer? types of customers, factors affecting customer satisfaction, satisfaction levels, how to satisfy customers, reasons for dissatisfaction, benefits of customer satisfaction, customer expectations, attributes of customer satisfaction and tools of customer satisfaction.

Meaning of Customer Satisfaction

In business organizations, customer satisfaction is the basic element for success. Having unsatisfied customers can result in an extensive loss in profits through inadequate word of mouth and lack of repeat business. Therefore, to be successful, organizations must examine the needs and wants of their customers. Customer satisfaction is defined as the amount of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose described experience with a firm, its products, or its services (ratings) goes beyond stipulated satisfaction goals. In a survey of nearly 200 senior marketing managers, 71 percent admitted that they saw customer satisfaction metric very essential in managing and monitoring their businesses. In situations where customers have high expectations and the actual experience falls short, they will be let down and will probably evaluate their experience as less than satisfying.

Many researchers explained the importance of customer satisfaction. Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as: “a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations”. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) said that satisfaction can be associated with feelings of acceptance, happiness, relief, excitement, and delight. 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”.

To comprehend the essence of customer satisfaction, take these facts into consideration: customers with problems most times do not respond and only 4% of them protest; usually a person with problems tells 9 other people about their good experience. The effects of customer satisfaction include:

- Satisfied customers are probably going to narrate their experiences to other people to the order of possibly five or six people. In the same way, dissatisfied customers are probably to tell another ten people of their unsuccessful experience.
- Furthermore, it is necessary to know that a lot of customers will not protest and this will differ from one industry sector to another.
- Lastly, if people think that dealing with customer satisfaction/complaint is expensive, they need to know that it costs as much as 25 percent more to sign up new customers”.

Levels of Satisfaction

There are four basic levels of customer satisfaction centered on the extent to which customer expectations are met. The greater the degree of customer satisfaction attained, the greater the organization’s success. The basic levels of customer satisfaction include:

- *Meet customer expectations:* The basic requirement to remain in business is to meet customer’s expectation. When this is achieved, customers will have no complains. It leads to satisfaction but not loyalty. If a company fails to meet customer’s expectation, they will go away and look for someone else who will. If a competitor shows that it can meet your customers’ expectation, your present customers would become ex-customers.
- *Exceed customer expectations:* This level of customer satisfaction is attained through the process of amazing customers by exceeding what they expected. Some ways of exceeding customer expectation include: fast and friendly service, follow-up telephone calls etc. This level of customer satisfaction moves you above ordinary survival, establishing customer loyalty and advantage over competitors. It also leads to improvement in profit margins.
- *Delight your customers:* This involves not only exceeding customer expectation but putting a smile on their faces. Customers basic needs are not just met or even surpassed, but they have been affected on an emotional basis. Once customers have been delighted, it becomes challenging for competitors to take them away.
- *Amaze your customers:* This level elevates an organization’s business. It involves not just meeting or exceeding customer’s expectation or simply delighting them but to amaze them. When this is done on a constant basis, the organization would occupy a dominant position in the market and achieve growth and profitability.

Reasons for Dissatisfaction

According to Goodman, the typical reasons for customer dissatisfaction can be categorized into five. They include:

- Defects arising from production or service facilities and/or employee mistakes: The problems within this first category can be sorted out within the boundary of a company’s plant or service delivery activities.
- Marketing overpromises: This problem is caused by the marketing department. The most that can be done by a customer service manager is to notify the marketing department of the problems they are causing.
- Misleading marketing.
- Unreasonable customer expectations: Customers make blunders when they are unacquainted about the appropriate use of a product. Also, customer ineffectiveness can result in problems in almost every industry. Unreasonable customer expectation also causes problems. If customer surveys show that customers abuse products, the information should be passed to the marketing department so that suitable labels can be added to the product to establish a customer education program.

- Reasonable mistake of customer: Customers bring about problems when products and services are used in other ways than they are intended.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Customer satisfaction surveys have since been interwoven into corporate business activities, marketing programs and customer initiatives. It allows a company to acquire immense understanding about customers' needs and wants. It provides feedback on a company's product and services. The result obtained from a customer satisfaction survey accustoms a company towards a more concentrated customer service and improves relationship with customers.

The benefits of customer satisfaction surveys include:

- Feedback: a major advantage of customer satisfaction survey is that it provides feedback from customers in form of comments, answers and suggestions relating to the products of a company and its business practices.
- Desired improvement: actions are undertaken rapidly to produce desired improvements or tackle complaints and pacify relevant customers where feedback is negative on any area.
- Better innovation: the examination of customer feedback surveys becomes the foundation for customer intelligence. Such intelligence can be used to motivate innovative efforts of the company.
- Greater customization: a customer satisfaction survey also provides essential understanding about the various customer segments and products in order to customize services and marketing approaches accordingly.
- Long term relationship: Customer satisfaction surveys makes it possible for the companies to constantly and better handle customer needs and expectations, sustain brand reputation and aid long term relationships with customers.
- Tracking changes in feedback: since surveys are replicable, it can be carried out often in order to constantly gain feedback. It is therefore allows you to compare and evaluate data overtime and assess any changes.

The weaknesses of customer satisfaction survey include:

- Customer exhaustion: there is usually a problem of getting people to fill out surveys. Sending surveys usually results in burnout of the customers and may lead to lower satisfaction surveys.
- Anonymity issues: customers believe that they are being tracked since there is so much unwanted spam. This makes customers hesitant to divulge information which may result in more sales calls in the future. It leads to difficulty in getting the needed responses.

Customer Expectations

Customers' expectations are opinions about service delivery that operate as values with which performance is measured. Absolute knowledge about customer expectation is important to service marketers because customers measure up their perceptions of performance with standards when assessing quality of service. Knowledge of customer expectation is the most essential step in providing quality service.

There are three basic types of customer expectations of service: *Desired service; adequate service and Predicted service*. The conceptual model of customer expectation can be categorized into four core sections: 1) Expected service component, 2) Experience of desired service, 3) Experience of adequate service and 4) Experience of both desired and predicted service. Customer service expectation comprises of two levels. They include: 1) Desired service level (the service the customer expects to receive) and 2) Adequate service level (the service the customer sees as satisfactory).

Common customer expectations include:

- *Promptness*: customers do not want to be delayed in receiving required services.
- *Professionalism*: customers require service providers to be well informed and experienced in carrying out their duties.

- *Accuracy*: customers presume service providers would obtain information correctly the first time.
- *Friendliness*: customers desire to be handled with courtesy and respect.
- *Honesty*: customers require authentic and straightforward information and responses.
- *Empathy*: customers require service providers to be understanding and willing to listen to them.

FORMS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This comprises of the explanation of the basic concepts relating to customer recommendation such as the meaning of customer recommendation to others, determinants of customer recommendation and the benefits of customer recommendation to others.

Meaning of Customer Recommendation to Others

The concept of customer recommendation stems from word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth could be positive, neutral or negative. Chung and Drake (2006) stated that positive word-of-mouth occurs when consumers are willing to recommend services to others. Word-of-mouth is a complex term; so customer recommendations are used in situations where customers give positive opinion about products or services willingly to others. Therefore, customer recommendations are the deliberate efforts of customers to recommend their service experience to friends and relatives. Positive recommendation is seen as a tool that produces the utmost value for supplier firms. As a result, customer recommendations should be seen as an essential driver for distributing products and services.

Determinants of Customer Recommendation to Others

Many researchers have attempted to investigate the determinants of customer recommendations. A large number of them propose that post-purchase responses qualify for customer recommendations. However, for the purpose of this study, customer satisfaction and flow experience will be considered as the determinants of customer recommendations.

- **Customer satisfaction**: Customer satisfaction and recommendation to others have a U-shaped relationship. This implies that if a customer is highly satisfied he/she will be enthusiastic about recommending his/her service experience to other people. So also, if a customer is dissatisfied, he/she will not be keen about recommending his/her experience to people. The satisfaction of customers is an important factor in the analysis of customer drive to recommend product or service to future customers. Thus, customer satisfaction is essential in enhancing customer recommendations. Therefore the willingness to recommend and to make recommendations are extensively used to measure the impact of customer satisfaction.
- **Flow experience**: Flow experience is a characteristic of a high level of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is one of the aims for a customer to have a flow experience, flow experience can be compared to a high level of satisfaction effect on customer recommendations. Flow refers to the general responsiveness of people when they perform with complete involvement. Therefore total satisfaction which is a type of goal motivates a customer to attain a higher level of customer satisfaction: flow experience.

Benefits of Customer Recommendation to Others

It is essential for an organization to develop its customer base on a continuous basis. A company can only develop if it concentrates on delivering quality product and service. Only happy customers can assist in enhancing the market status of an organization. The following are the benefits of customer recommendations.

Quick acceptance

In most cases, a content customer would recommend the product and services of a company to his/her relatives and friends. An affirmative feedback from a current customer would enable a company attract new customers effortlessly and its product and service would achieve speedy acceptance. Normally, people would rather buy a new item simply because it has been recommended

by existing customer. Hence, one of the most essential benefits of customer recommendation is that it is a rapid approach to acquire new customers.

Decrease in marketing cost

Usually, an organization is expected to promote its products and services so as to acquire new customers. Therefore, customer recommendation helps in decreasing the general cost of advertisement and promotions of a company. It is essential to be aware that an organization cannot entirely escape the cost of advertisement and promotion through customer recommendation. Nevertheless, customer recommendations can lessen the efforts associated with broad marketing movement.

Increase in profitability

An increase in the number of new customers would assist in increasing a company's profitability levels. Customer recommendations offer a company the chance to maximize its full production capacity so as to meet the demands of the new customers. In addition, when a company cuts back on its marketing cost, it reduces the price of its product and services such reduction in its products and service enhances the company's competitive position in the market.

Increase in employee motivation

In a situation where customers provide positive feedback the level of motivation of a company's employees are enhanced. A customer in some cases may recommend a company's product to other customers owing to the excellent services of the sales and support staff of the organization. Those kinds of recommendations give employees a sense of achievement.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a significant concept in marketing and management and this concept has been used by many businesses as a goal to perform (Yi, 1990; Wang and Lo, 2002). A basic definitional inconsistency is evident by the debate of whether satisfaction is a process or an outcome (Yi 1990). More precisely, consumer satisfaction definitions have either emphasized an evaluation process (e.g., Fornell 1992; Hunt 1977; Oliver 1981) or a response to an evaluation process (e.g., Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt 1994; Howard and Sheth 1969; Oliver 1997, 1981; Westbrook and Reilly 1983). Most definitions have favored the notion of consumer satisfaction as a response to an evaluation process. Specifically, there is an overriding theme of consumer satisfaction as a summary concept (i.e., a fulfillment response (Oliver 1997); affective response (Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt 1994); overall evaluation (Fornell 1992); psychological state (Howard and Sheth 1969); global evaluative judgment (Westbrook 1987); summary attribute phenomenon (Oliver 1992); or evaluative response (Day 1984)). However, there is disagreement concerning the nature of this summary concept. Researchers portray consumer satisfaction as either a cognitive response (e.g., Bolton and Drew 1991; Howard and Sheth 1969) or an effective response (e.g., Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins 1987; Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt 1994; Westbrook and Reilly 1983).

Customer Recommendation to Others

Recommendation by positive word-of-mouth is increasingly seen as a marketing tool that generates the greatest benefit for supplier firms (Morgan and Rego 2006, Reichheld 2006). There is evidence that recommendations have a strong influence on consumer choice, particularly in the pre-purchase stage (East et al. 2005). From a review of past research, it is clear that customer satisfaction can affect post-purchase behavior such as re-purchase and customer recommendations (e.g. Gremler et al. 2001, Yeung and Ennew 2001). According to Anderson (1998) however, customers may not recommend services to other people, even though they satisfied with the service. Similarly, Santos and Boote (2003) posited that the perceived performance of a product or service should be above a consumer's desired expectations. A number of studies seek to explore the determinants of consumer recommendations (Brown et al., , Shabbir et al. 2007). Most researchers note that satisfied customers

are willing to recommend services to others (e.g. Palmatier et al. 2006, Morgan and Rego 2006). On the other hand, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) proposes that flow experience emphasizes an individual's subjective experience state made by interacting with activities that may also act as a kind of post-purchase responses. Word-of-mouth may be classified into three: positive, neutral, or negative. Chung and Darke (2006) noted that positive word-of-mouth occurs when consumers are willing to recommend services to others. Moreover, word-of-mouth also impels potential customers to seek advice or actual customers to give advice (East et al. 2005). Morgan et al., (2005) suggested that overall customer satisfaction relates to the post-purchase phenomenon, such as future purchase intentions and the likelihood to recommend. Similarly, Lam et al. (2004) showed that a customer satisfied with a service provider might be willing to recommend the services to other customers. Therefore, 'willingness to recommend' and 'making recommendations to others' metrics are usually used to evaluate the effect of customer satisfaction.

Relationship between Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Recommendation to Others

The relationship connecting the empirical framework of the concepts described indicates that service quality is the outcome of the comparison between customer's expectations and perceived performance of service. This goes to show that perceived service quality certainly affects the level of customer satisfaction and their repurchase intentions and recommendations to others. Quality in service is very important especially for the growth and development of service sector business enterprises (Powell, 1995). It works as an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Ruyter and Bloemer, 1995). Anton (1996) said that "satisfaction is positively associated with repurchase intentions, likelihood of recommending a product or service, loyalty and profitability". Service quality is a customer perception of how well a service meets or exceeds their expectations (Czepiel, 1990). It is considered as a key factor for enhancing customer satisfaction (Geetika, 2010). Even the study of Cronin and Taylor (1992) found it a key antecedent to customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion:

Findings from this study indicated that there is a positive relationship between the components of service quality and perceived value. Furthermore it showed that network coverage, call clarity, call connectivity, communication, empathy and competence have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. In other words, if an organization ensures adequate network coverage, call clarity, call connectivity, communication, empathy and competence, the satisfaction of customers would be enhanced which helps increase the organization's market share. Furthermore, varieties, voice quality and rates and charges have a positive impact on customer recommendation to others. The provision of varieties of services by the service providers would give a positive impact on customer recommendations because the customers are attracted mainly by a wide range of services at affordable costs. In the same vein, voice quality over the network would affect customer recommendations positively because every customer wants to have an uninterrupted call conversation. Once the organization is able to achieve that, the customers will be willing to recommend the service to others who are not aware. Finally, network coverage, call clarity, empathy and competence have a positive effect on customer recommendation while communication and call connectivity have a negative impact on customer recommendation. In other words, network coverage, call clarity, empathy and competence if enhanced in the organization would increase the willingness of customers to recommend the service to others. The conclusions derived from the study of service quality, customer satisfaction and recommendation to others relies to a great extent on the researcher's point of view. The rationale for this research was to bring the opinions about service quality to the fore. This research work has however assisted in making a number of conclusions about the way customers perceive service quality. From the findings, it was revealed that quality service has a positive impact on the customer's satisfaction and their willingness to recommend the service to others. It can be deduced that the telecommunications organizations considered in this

study are providing quality services to an extent. This research work has however been a source of understanding that has led to the uncovering of a multitude of facts associated with service quality and its effect on customer satisfaction and recommendation to others. In other words, customer satisfaction and recommendation to others is to an extent dependent on service quality.

Managerial implications:

The under-listed are suggestions for handling customer's expectation.

- *Demonstrate fair play:* this involves establishing trust. Customers would probably be more tolerant if they are certain that the company is trying to be fair.
- *Be reliable:* this requires the company to perform promised service.
- *Manage promises:* there is the possibility that firms would meet customer's expectations when they deliver on their promises.
- *Influence the process dimensions:* this involves a wide range of activities intended to promote the capability and commitment of people to be effective.

Recommendations for practice

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been drawn up to help organizations understand how customer's perception of service quality can affect their satisfactions as well as their willingness to recommend the service to others:

- Customer satisfaction is very important in every organization, therefore everything done within the organization must be centered on customers in order to achieve customer satisfactions.
- A combination of different elements that make up service quality should be employed in order to ensure a positive perception of value by the customers.
- Service quality is the backbone of any organization which in turn leads to the achievement of customer satisfaction. This indicates that service quality affects customer satisfaction.
- If a variety of services, voice quality over the network and call and internet rates and charges are boosted within the industry, it would enhance the willingness of customers to recommend the service to other people which would expand the industry's market base.
- The telecommunication industry should focus their attention on network coverage, call clarity, empathy and competence as these factors or elements of service quality have been found to influence customer recommendations positively. The industry should also seek to improve its communication facilities and the connectivity of calls.

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