

A STUDY ON SERVICES BLUEPRINTING AND SERVICES GAP ANALYSIS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TNSTC LIMITED IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Various techniques for measuring the customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction have been developed in the field of marketing since 1960s. In this project the use of customer satisfaction measurements in public transportation is analysed. The study was carried out in Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) Limited in Villupuram district. The study is related to customer satisfaction. A survey was taking among the customer to know their satisfaction level provided by TNSTC Ltd in Villupuram. The challenge today is not retaining the customers but fully satisfying them in competitive market is the need for the study. This survey will be helpful for the organization for identifying the areas of dissatisfaction of the customers. Questionnaire was framed based on SERVQUAL. The various statistical tools like percentage analysis, chi-square correlation are used to tabulate the data there by deriving suggestions and conclusions. The various factors involved are personal needs, past experience, word of mouth communication, services of other service providers, customer competency, communication, promises, image, equity and social trends. The data analysis shows that customers are not satisfied with the communication system. It is suggested that the organization can improve communication between the customers and can take necessary steps.

Keywords: *Services Blueprinting, SERVQUAL, Services Gap, Critical Driver, Empathy.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Bus services play a major role in the provision of public transport. These services can take many forms, varying in distance covered and types of vehicles used, and can operate with fixed or flexible routes and schedules. Services may be operated by public or private companies and be provided using bus fleets of various sizes. Transport plays an important role in the economic development of the country by creating employment opportunities and sustaining economic activities. Transport is the channel of social and economic interaction involving the physical movement of people and goods. The quest for service quality has been an essential strategic component for service firms like buses attempting to succeed and survive in today's competitive environment. The SERVQUAL model focuses on the difficulty in ensuring high quality of services for all

customers in all situations. SERVQUAL methodology is an analytical approach for evaluating the difference between customer expectations and perceptions of the quality. A customer journey map is a detailed visual document that captures the customer experience across touch points, including what the customer is doing, thinking, and/or feeling. A service blueprint is a detailed visual document that captures the service delivery process across touch points, including the back stage and front stage of the service delivery. To say that another way: Journey maps contain fewer process details, but more information about the customer experience; Service blueprints contain fewer experience details, but more information about the processes that deliver the service. At their most extreme, journey maps are more experience-centric and service blueprints are more process-centric.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumer satisfaction is defined either as a feeling or as including a feeling component (Liljander, V 1995; Liljander & Strandvik, 1997). Loyalty is a key goal of marketing in nearly all industries that being contributed by having a good quality of service provided to the customers. It has long been recognized that it is easier to retain existing customers by meeting their needs at a reasonable price than it is to attract new customers. This is true in transportation services (Daniel, Peter and Karle, 1997). Customer satisfaction in simple to define has its own relationship with the quality. Customer satisfaction on the quality of services is not an absolute concept but a relative one with improvements to customer satisfaction measure only achieved when customers both notice improvement and then modifies their attitude accordingly (Alison, Adrianand Andrew, 1997). Organization that constantly measure their customer satisfaction and then make changes in response to the level of satisfaction will achieve its bottom line performance. Service processes have a number of characteristics, which the managers must understand, since they define the competitive environment of service processes. The general characteristics and requirements of service processes can be categorized according to several schemes. Quite often, authors have developed their own set of service process characteristics best suited to the specific topic they want to deal with in services design. This implies that a common opinion on which characteristics should be considered for classifying service processes does not exist yet (Kasper et al., 1999). Selecting those characteristics depends on the nature of the SE and the quality strategies of managers. A relatively comprehensive set of characteristics have been suggested by Shahin and Jamshidian (2006) for differentiating and targeting service encounters.

They include 1) extent of contact; 2) labour intensity; 3) interaction; 4) customization; 5) complexity of service; 6) nature of service act; 7) recipient of act; 8) profit or non profit; 9) internal and external services; and 10) The physical site of the service delivery. The service blueprints show that the level of customer involvement and interaction, labour intensity, and complexity in the Check-In services seem to be relatively higher than in the other services provided at front desk. Therefore, the Check-In process is targeted and addressed as critical. However, based on the research outcomes this advantage is added by this paper to those addressed in the literature that service blueprinting not only can be used for analysis of a single process, but also it could be employed for comparison of different service processes and targeting the most critical ones. As it was emphasized, service blueprinting plays a great role in analyzing service processes and designing a quality

service. By reviewing the available literature on subjects such as service blueprinting, service mapping and process flowcharting, some most effective symbols

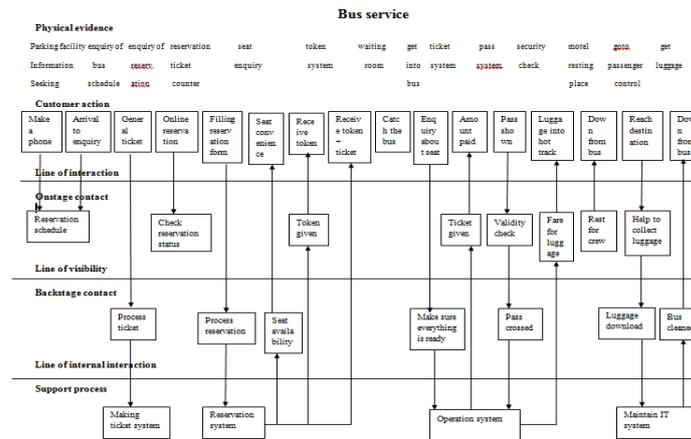
III. SERVICES BLUEPRINTING

It is technique used for service innovation. The technique was first described by Lynn Shostack, a bank executive, in Harvard Business Review in 1984. A service blueprint describes a service in enough detail to implement and maintain it carefully

According to Valarie A. Zeithamal service blueprint is a picture or map that accurately portrays the service system so that the different people involved in providing it can understand and deal with it objectively regardless of their roles or their individual point of view. Blueprints are particularly useful at the design and redesign stages of service development. A service blueprint visually displays the service by simultaneously depicting the process of service delivery, the point of customer contact, the roles of customers and employees and the visible elements of service. It provides a break a service break down into logical components and to depict the steps or tasks in the, the means by which the tasks are executed and the evidence of service as the customer experiences it. It has tis origin in variety of fields and techniques including logistics, industrial engineering, and decision theory and computer system analysis.

3.1 Components of Service Blueprint

- ✓ Customer Actions: The steps that customers take as part of the service delivery process.
- ✓ Front stage (Visible Contact Employee) Actions: This element is separated from the customer actions by a 'line of interaction'. These actions are face-to-face actions between employees and customers.
- ✓ Backstage (Invisible Contact Employee) Actions: The 'line of visibility' separates the onstage from the Backstage actions. Everything that appears above the line of visibility can be seen by the customers, while everything under the line of visibility is invisible for the customers.
- ✓ Support Processes: The 'internal line of interaction' separates the contact employees from the support processes. These are all the activities carried out by individuals and units within the company who are not contact employees. These activities need to happen in order for the service to be delivered.
- ✓ Physical Evidence: For each customer action, and every moment of truth, the physical evidence that customers come in contact with is described at the very top of the service blueprint. These are all the tangibles that customers are exposed to that can influence their quality perceptions.

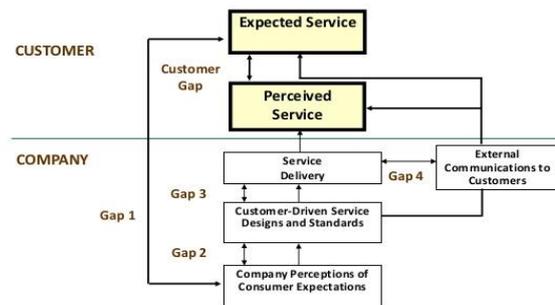


IV. SERVICE GAP MODEL

SERVQUAL (service quality gap model) is a gap method in service quality measurement, a tool that can be used in all industries. The aim of this model is to

- 1) Identify the gaps between customer expectation and the actual services provided at different stages of service delivery
- 2) Close the gap and improve the customer service
- 3) The gap model of service quality brings customers focus and service excellence while maintaining a focus on customers.

Gaps Model of Service Quality



Gap 1: Not knowing what the customers expect (Knowledge Gap)

It is between management Perception of Customer expectations and customer Expected Service

Gap 2: Not selecting the right service design and standards (Policy Gap)

It is between management Perception of Customer expectations and Service Quality Specification

Gap 3: Not delivering to service standards (Delivery Gap)

This gap is between the delivery of the customer experiences and what is communicated to the customers

Gap 4: Not matching performance to promises (Communication Gap)

It is the gap between customer perception of the experience and customer's expectation of the service

V. SERVQUAL

It was developed in mid-eighties by Zeithamal, Parasuraman & Berry. It is used to measure the scale of quality in the service sectors.

5.1 Dimensions of Servqual

- **TANGIBLES**-Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials
- **RELIABILITY**-Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- **RESPONSIVENESS**-Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- **ASSURANCE**-Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
- **EMPATHY**-Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers

5.2 Objective of the Study

1. The main objective of the study is to measure the customer satisfaction with special reference to TNSTC Ltd Villupuram
2. The secondary objective of the study is to determine the factors affecting the current service delivery with SERVQUAL instruments.
3. The study helps in understanding the customer expectations and balancing the customer expectation and perception and closing the gap.

5.3 Need for the Study

The challenge today is not just retaining the customers but fully satisfying them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their work. Customer satisfaction has emerged as a critical driver of business success in today's competitive market. Further customer satisfaction can be a deciding factor in organizational success. Thus gaining a competitive edge, organization need to find out whether their customers are satisfied or not

5.4 Scope of the Study

1. To identify the customer level of satisfaction towards the bus service offered by TNSTC.
2. This study is helpful for the organization for conducting further research. Thus study is helpful to the organization for identifying the area of dissatisfaction of the customers.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design is used which describes the characteristic about the population being studied. The data were collected from 876 passengers who alighted and entered into the buses of TNSTC at specific place at Villupuram integrated bus stand in Villupuram city. In this survey convenience sampling is used. The reason for this is that there is no available sampling frame. The questionnaire is framed based on SERVQUAL. It is divided into three parts. The first part is demographic questionnaire and the second part is regarding the expectations of the service quality in TNSTC in Villupuram district. The last part is to examine the respondent perception of service quality.

6.1 Tools Used

The following are the tools used to measure customer satisfaction. Percentage analysis, correlation co-efficient and SERVQUAL calculation are used.

6.2 Findings

- ✓ From the study it is found that 37.3% of customers reveals that TNSTC have adequate resource and capacity for effective functioning of the firm
- ✓ From the study, 37.8% of customers strongly agreed that the dresses of the staffs in TNSTC are neat and clean
- ✓ It is found that 36.7% of respondents states that the TNSTC buses arrive at the destination in time
- ✓ 37.3% of the respondents agreed that the busses of TNSTC never break down on the road
- ✓ 40% of the respondents said that they can easily book their ticket for journey
- ✓ It is found that 43.4% of the customers said that the staffs of the firm satisfy the customer request right at first time
- ✓ 42.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that the time table of TNSTC buses in the bus stand is error free
- ✓ 45.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that TNSTC always inform about the change of time table and prices in advance to people.
- ✓ 47% of the respondents agreed that the communication with the customer is clear and attended the customer request
- ✓ It is found that 47.4% of them said that they have in-depth occupational knowledge about the job
- ✓ 39.7% of the customers feel safe during the travelling in TNSTC buses
- ✓ 28% of customer said that they are not sure about TNSTC has equipped with modern technology due to non-transparency of firm structure
- ✓ Majority of the respondents agreed that TNSTC's employees are always polite towards to the customers
- ✓ Majority (40.7%) of the customers states that TNSTC are not providing the best services to the customers.
- ✓ 36.7% of respondents said that the operating hours are convenient to customers
- ✓ 39.3% of the respondents said that they are not sure about the individual attention to help customers

VII. CLOSING THE GAP

In customer orientation strategy, delivering a quality service for a specific product should be based on a clear understanding of the target market. Understanding customer needs and knowing customer expectations could be the best way to close the gap.

The employee in the company should be recruited properly so that they have enough knowledge and they should be trained properly to behave properly to passengers. The buses should arrive as per schedule and it should reach the destination on time. Customer complaints should be considered and given importance.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The buses can be cleaned for every trip so that it appears to be cleaned. The staffs should make the buses stop at the particular place where ever the customers need. Like private buses the government should provide welfare measures like providing water bottles. Even though there are much facilities the customer request are not satisfied due to administrative rules. So it can be changed. All the services should be made available so as to improve the revenue of the government organization The government should take necessary steps to analyse the customer expectation so as to provide efficient service and to retain the customers.

IX. CONCLUSION

A comparison of passengers perceptions of service quality with their expectations using correlation and SERVQUAL tools showed statistically there is a significant difference on all the attributed examined for the study

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