

Investigation of the Relationship between Communicative Skills and Customer Satisfaction among Administrative Staff of Ardebil Province Education Organization

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted in order to determine status of communicative skills of official staff and its relationship with customer satisfaction (teachers) of Ardebil province education organization. The research is descriptive and correlation and 292 individuals were selected by multi stages random sampling method based on Cochran formula among all education organization teachers. SERVQUAL satisfaction questionnaire and author made staff communication skills questionnaire originated from management profile questionnaire were used for measuring the data. Validity of the questionnaires was measured and the data were analyzed by Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression. The results showed that staff communication skills and customer satisfaction are average. The analysis of stepwise regression showed that customer satisfaction is increased by enhancement of empathy, verbal and nonverbal feedback and information. There is a positive correlation between communication skills (information and listening) of official staff and customer satisfaction (teachers), ($p < 0.01$).

KEY WORDS: Communication Skills, Customer Satisfaction, Administrative Staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today success of organizations depends on an administrative cycle that customers form this cycle. Input-output and offering services lead to customer satisfaction. Customer's satisfaction is transferred to the system as feedback. Satisfaction is a positive feeling in customer. Indeed, this satisfaction is obtained by meeting customer expectations by staff communication skills and performance. When customers' expectations and offered services are in one level or services are upper than customer expectations, the customer will be satisfied or dissatisfied or will be excited. When an organization recognizes its customer's expectations, it can meet the customers' needs and satisfies them by using efficient staff with significant communication skills and technical knowledge. Employees play an important role in operation cycle and survival of organization. Employees are responsible for implementation and progression of organization process. The organization could be efficient and successful by optimal management and as a result the customers will be satisfied. Customer satisfaction is one of the new criteria for measuring organization performance and quality of services offering in governmental organizations. There are different definitions for customers' satisfaction:

- Making pleasure, satisfaction and optimality as a result of meeting referees demands by service offering is called satisfaction (Board, 2002).

- Katerer believes that satisfaction is a function of difference between comprehension of performance and individual (Rahnavard, 2006).

- Evaluation of received services quality is called satisfaction (Tarokh and et al, 2007).

According to the definitions customer satisfaction (Rahnavard, 2006) is:

- a- A process
- b- A comprehension and it is different based on individuals' comprehension
- c- It is result of comparison of expected event and real performance.

From organization view point customer satisfaction is result of a three parts system consists of (SWIFT, 1998): organization performance, staff as service officers and customer expectation. The efficacy of this system depends on appropriate merge of organizations parts. Customer satisfaction is common among these three parts. Ganji and Lys believe that organization success and customer satisfaction concepts are close to each other since customer satisfaction is one of the success key factors. It can be concluded that in order to be successful the organization should have satisfied customer (Lotfi, 2011). The main effects of customer satisfaction on organization process are:

- 1- Continues reduction of costs and shortening of working cycle because of effective utilization of resources

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- 2- Improvement of results of operations and predictability of these results
- 3- Feasibility of consideration of concentrated and prior opportunities for improvement
- 4- Increase of capacity of valuation for both parties
- 5- Transfer of importance of providing customer demands and also legal obligations to organization
- 6- Establishing of quality policy (satisfaction).

Quality is a principal concept required to comprehend; it is a kind of understanding applied for everyone and everything. Quality is a part of life and finally it is continuous providing of agreed expectation of customer and all benefited individuals (teachers, staff, parents and etc.) so that it creates value (Ball, 2006). Today services offering organizations consider customer satisfaction level as a main criterion for measuring their quality and this trend is increasing. The vice versa is true (Jafari and et al, 2004). One of the key factors of success is staff effective communication, since information enters organization as main data besides effective communication and in this case it needs to effective communication system in order to proceed and flow in the organization (Mogimi, 1999). The relationship among organization elements lead to integration of organization. Thus the staff should aware of quantity and quality of communication process and recognize it effective (Alvani, 2000). So communication skill is necessary and it requires to consideration. Communication skills are behaviors that a person communicates with others that lead to positive respond and avoidance of negative responds (Berko, 2010). Effective communication depends on communication skills involving information, listening, verbal and nonverbal, written, empathy and feedback skills. Information is the first communication process that provides opportunity for staff based on time serial in order to aware of information related to decisions, changes and etc. (Ahanchiyan, 2003). The second process is listening by different definition. Sam Dipp defines it as active process consists of attention, comprehension, evaluation, remembering and responding. Effective listening is principle for communication (Rezayan, 1998). When the customer believes that the employees listen to him he is satisfied and trust to organization (Alan, 2000). Verbal and nonverbal skills are other parts of communication. There are different definitions: 1- Helrikel Vaslecum (1996) defines verbal communication as speaking and writing skills. 2- Tompson (1996) proposes definitions that consider speaking aspect and relates verbal communication to verbal aspect (quotation from Ayshi Kava, 2002). Accordingly verbal skill involves attentive utilization of verbal symbols in order to persuasion of other to act (Robinse, 2001). Nonverbal communication involves all related aspects like gesture and body movement and manner of saying of words except words. Manner of saying of words, pauses, loudness and accent effect on meaning of words (Mirkaamli, 1998). Verbal skill is used for sending message. The superiority of this skill is its speed and message feedback (Sarmad, 2002). Written skill is used for clear and effective writing and selection of writing style for official and nonofficial communication (Bakhtiyari, 2000). There are tangible reasons that show prefer of message sender to use written skill: sender and receiver of message have document of message and this message can be held for long time as document. In case of asking questions about content of message it can be offered written messages. The superiority of written communication is in communication process. So, written messages have powerful rationally and they are eloquent. It is clear that written messages have fewer defects and they are exact and need to more time. The disadvantage of this communication is that there is no feedback in its result (Robinse, 2001). Capability to use empathy in a bilateral relation is a difficult aspect of communication quality. It means beginning of correct communication. Empathy is comprehension of others feeling (Farhangi, 2000). Feedback is the final part of communication and it is feedback of result of message to sender so that sender is aware of sending and receiving conditions. Communication process is incomplete without feedback (Mohseniyan Rad, 2011). Shirazi proposes two main advantages for feedback: 1- Criterion for determination of level of communications process success, 2- The basic of correction or interpretation of messages is future. In addition feedback converts communication process into bilateral reaction and empowers it and it leads to reciprocal understanding of sender and receiver.

Rababah (2011) in his research suggested that the role of staff communication skills was significant in working successfulness for promotion of customer satisfaction and quality and verbal and nonverbal and information played an important role in customer satisfaction. Frozandeh (2011) showed that the level of customer satisfaction was %75.2 in acceptable level in the governmental organizations. Riaz (2010) in his studies pointed to level of servicing as staff communication skill in communication organization in promoting customer satisfaction in acceptable level. Meyer (2008) suggested staff communication skills in higher level for success in organizations performance related to increase of quality and customer satisfaction. Transorrans (2009) suggested that there is a direct relationship between customer service offering as official staff communication skill and increase of customer satisfaction. Quality and customer satisfaction are related to staff communication skills in order to increase trust. Garbarino (2011) reported customer satisfaction in this relation. The result of Mazinani (2011) showed significant customer satisfaction because of skill of staffing communicating with customer. He pointed that one of the main factors in effective communication for obtaining customer satisfaction is optimal feedback. Doaei (1998) found that empathy of education organization staff with customers was effective in customer satisfaction. Ahanchiyan (2001)

showed that staff received highest score in listening and received low score in information related to concentration on defined communicative skills. The employees who communicate daily with customers consider listening as usual affair and pay less attention to listening obtained low score (Shabani,2004).Harasi(1997) believes that verbal and nonverbal and written skills are important for customer satisfaction. Mohammad pour reported that there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and staff performance feedback. MirGafuri and et al (2010) found that customer satisfaction was significant related to verbal and nonverbal and written skills and this result is important in customer satisfaction. Rajabi(2011) suggested that there is a significant and positive relationship among staff communication skills and customer satisfaction. Miler (2000) showed that verbal and nonverbal and listening are employees communication skills that affect significantly on customer satisfaction. This article aims to investigate the relationship between staff communication skills and customer satisfaction in Ardebil education organization.

2. Research hypotheses

- 1- There is a relationship between staff communication skills and customer satisfaction (teachers).
- 2- There is a relationship between communication skills components and customer satisfaction (teachers).

The research is descriptive and correlation and the statistical population involve 1200 teachers of Ardebil Education Organization.292 teachers were selected based on Cochran formula by multi stages random sampling method. For collection of data SERVQUAL (1980) and author made staff communication skills questionnaires were used. In order to determine validity of the questionnaires after conducting on small sample (25 persons) alpha coefficient of 0.96 was obtained for communication skills and it was obtained 0.93 for satisfaction. Both questionnaires were scaled based on five grades Likert scale.

3. Hypotheses test

- 1 -There is a relationship between staff communication skills and customer satisfaction (teachers).
- 2-There is a relationship between communication skills components and customer satisfaction (teachers).

Table 1. Correlation Coefficient

	Value	Communication skills (General)	Information	listening	verbal/ nonverbal	Written	Empathy	Feedback	Satisfaction
Communication skills (General)	P Correlation Sig N	1							
Information	P Correlation Sig N	**0.881 0.000 243	1						
listening	P Correlation Sig N	**0.927 0.000 243	**0.849 0.000 270	1					
verbal/ nonverbal	P Correlation Sig N	**0.941 0.000 243	**0.758 0.000 263	**0.799 0.000 272	1				
Written	P Correlation Sig N	**0.894 0.000 243	**0.687 0.000 262	**0.762 0.000 273	**0.866 0.000 266	1			
Empathy	P Correlation Sig N	**0.894 0.000 243	**0.661 0.000 270	**0.752 0.000 281	**0.843 0.000 273	**0.787 0.000 274	1		
Feedback	P Correlation Sig N	**0.869 0.000 243	**0.665 0.000 273	**0.707 0.000 284	**0.802 0.000 275	**0.778 0.000 276	**0.813 0.000 285	1	
Satisfaction	P Correlation Sig N	**0.884 0.000 222	**0.704 0.000 251	**0.733 0.000 261	**0.854 0.000 253	**0.772 0.000 256	**0.839 0.000 263	**0.827 0.000 265	1

According to this fact that test significant level in communicative skills and satisfaction is less than significant level $p < 0.01$ and $p = 0.000$ and $r = 0.88$ so communicative skill (total) is correlated to satisfaction score. Also test significant level in communication skills and satisfaction is less than significant level $p < 0.01$ and $p = 0.000$ so all communicative skills components are correlated with each other score and also satisfaction score. The highest correlation is related to verbal and nonverbal skill by $r = 0.85$, empathy $r = 0.83$, feedback $r = 0.82$, written $r = 0.77$,

listening $r=0.73$ and information $r=0.73$. The scores show complete positive correlation. Customer satisfaction increases by enhancement of communicative skills scores.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Appropriate communication skill is one of the effective factors on customer satisfaction (teachers) in organizations (Hamilton, 2008). In this relation education organization staff required skill and knowledge play an important role in customer satisfaction. In this research the significant relationship was observed between communicative skills and administrative staff communicative skills and customer satisfaction. In other words, the scores show significant correlation. Teachers' satisfaction increases by enhancement of communicative skills scores. This finding is in agreement with findings of Diyani (2011), Mezzanine (2011), Rajabi (2011), Masudi Rad (2006), Rabab (2011), Garbarino (2011), Riaz (2011) and Trasorrans (2009). Communicative skill is one of the main skills effective in customer satisfaction success (Mir Kamali, 2010). Education organization plays an important role in investment in human resources and it is a main element and determinant consequence of performance and administrative staff obtains optimal communicative skills. Staff by effective and optimal skills empower communication with teachers and increase their satisfaction. According to findings following propositions are proposed:

- It is recommended to hold communicative skills training courses for official staff and distribute related magazines and publications.
- It is proposed that the staff empower the relationship between themselves and teachers by observing effective and practical viewpoints in feedback to customer that it is effective in improvement of customer satisfaction.
- It is necessary to conduct researches in different educational areas in different cities.
- According to gap among information, listening, verbal and nonverbal, empathy and feedback skills it is recommended to identify different aspects of customer satisfaction characteristics and measure their relationship with communication skills by researches.
- It is recommended identifying vulnerability of customer dissatisfaction in addition to measuring customer satisfaction.

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