Pergamon

Journal of Quality Management
6 (2001) 331–348

JOURNAL OF
QUALITY
MANAGEMENT

www.journalofqualitymanagement.com

Effects of service mechanisms and modes on customers' attributions about service delivery

Markus Groth[a,*], Barbara A. Gutek[b], Bambi Douma[b]

[a]*Australian Graduate School of Management, The University of New South Wales, UNSW Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia*
[b]*Department of Management and Policy, University of Arizona, 405 McClelland Hall, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA*

Received 1 March 2001; received in revised form 1 June 2001; accepted 1 August 2001

Abstract

We investigate the influence of two service delivery characteristics, service mechanism and mode, on customers' attributions about the quality of service. One hundred sixty-six students were surveyed about the type of service mechanism (relationship, encounter, and pseudorelationship), the perceived quality of service, and their attributions about the service delivery in three different service modes (face-to-face, telephone, and Internet) across two different service domains (banking and travel). Results indicate that customers with relationships perceive the quality of service they receive higher than those customers with pseudorelationships or encounters. In general, customers make attributions for service quality to the service provider rather than to external factors or themselves. In addition, customers who receive service face-to-face are less likely to give blame or credit to the company than those who receive service over the telephone or Internet. Interactions between perceived service quality and mechanism for different attributions are observed, indicating that the type of service delivery has a greater influence on customers' attributions when service quality is low. © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Service quality; Customer service; Attribution; Internet

---

1. Introduction

As the United States continue to move from a manufacturing to a service economy, the study of service management has received increased attention from academics and practi-

---

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61-2-9931-9200.
E-mail address: markusg@agsm.edu.au (M. Groth).

1084-8568/01/$ – see front matter © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.
PII: S1084-8568(01)00043-8

tioners alike. Services are different from manufactured products in that they are usually intangible, simultaneously produced and consumed, perishable, and heterogeneous (Sasser, Olson, & Wyckoff, 1978). An additional difference is that customers often contribute to the service delivery process (Chase & Tansik, 1983; Mills & Morris, 1986) but do not participate in the manufacture of the goods they buy. This participation of customers in the delivery of service is called customer coproduction (Kelley, Donnelly, & Skinner, 1990; Kelley, Skinner, & Donnelly, 1992).

Whereas, in its earlier stages, the service literature mainly focused on the differences between goods and services (Shostack, 1977) and the classification of services (Albrecht & Zemke, 1985; Lovelock, 1980, 1984; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985), more recent research is applying human resource management and organizational behavior principles to service organizations (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). For example, Bowen and Schneider (1985) have pointed out that intangibility, simultaneity of production and consumption, and customer coproduction limit objective reference points for customers to judge and evaluate the quality of service. Therefore, the service *experience* itself (i.e., the subjective perception of service delivery) often becomes a crucial reference point (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). In the absence of objective criteria for judging service quality and employee performance, customers often use tangible cues of the service delivery (e.g., the physical environment, the organization's website, service employees) for their evaluation. It has been argued that the interaction between a customer and a service provider not only affects customers' evaluations, but often is the service itself in the eye of the customer (Bowen, 1990; Bowen & Schneider, 1985; Bowen, Schneider, & Kim, 2000; Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985).

Because of customers' unique experience of service delivery and the lack of objective standards on how to judge service quality, it becomes important to understand customers' attributional processes in the delivery of services in order to determine how to improve service. Who or what gets credit for a satisfactory service experience? Who does the customer blame for poor service? Yet, customers' attributions about service have received little empirical attention. The purpose of this study is to examine attributions associated with three types of service mechanisms (relationships, encounters, and pseudorelationships) and three different service modes (face-to-face, telephone, and Internet) in two service domains (banking and travel). We study two different domains to see if our findings are domain specific. We picked banking and travel because they are both available in all three mechanisms and all three modes.

In order to explore a variety of possible effects of service mechanisms and modes of delivery, we examine the way both affect perceived quality of service and attributions about the quality of service.

2. Service mechanisms

Services can be delivered through several mechanisms, and building customer loyalty differs by the service mechanism. Gutek (1995) et al. (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, &

دریافت فوری ← متن کامل مقاله

ISIArticles
مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات