



Role of Measuring Customer Satisfaction in Improving the Performance in the Public Sector Organization

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Abstract

This study aimed to point out the ways and measures that used in the public sector organizations to measure the customer satisfaction, and what are the benefits of this measurement. By tackling the Islamic Waqf Institution in Jordan as a case study to represent the study population, and by distributing a written questionnaire on (43) families who are suffering from poverty. The study results indicated that the Islamic Waqf Institution in its current situation is not able to accomplish a higher degree of customer satisfaction, because the institution does not respond beneficiaries' needs and desires in its activities. Recommendations and implications are also presented.

Key words: Customer Satisfaction, Public Sector, Performance.

Introduction

Government as a big organization has its customers; those customers are the citizens, businesses and public and private employees. Government through its agencies, departments, and ministries provides information and services for each group of its customers, and as a result this performance can be judge fairly only by the customers.

Then the evaluation process of the performance of the public sector organization depends strongly on the customer's feedback. Because he needs the accurate information in a certain time that fits his need, and if he obtained the needed information, later or before this certain time, it will be useless information. Also; the customer needs the services that satisfy him and equilibrate with his expectations. If that not achieved by the public sector organizations, the customer will feel that his satisfaction is ignored which causes more complaints. This study will focus on the role of affiliation of the customer satisfaction in the public sector and its impact on improving the performance in the public organization.

Importance of the Study

The customer is the final judge of the quality of the product or the service or the information. For the private sector, managers are concerned in many aspects that relate to the

customer such as loyalty and retention, but in the public sector in general the customer (citizen, business), find themselves obligated to deal with different organizations in the public sector even if they provide their services in inefficient ways. The importance of this study derived from the impact of the voice of the customer that makes public organizations tend to create a welfare state through exchanging information and services with citizens and businesses and other government customers.

Study Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. How can the executives in the public sector measure the customer satisfaction in his dealing with the public sector organization?
2. What are the appropriate devices that may used to measure the customer satisfaction in the public sector?
3. What are the benefits of measuring the customer satisfaction in the public sector organizations?

Problem and Questions of the Study

The study problem takes the following from:

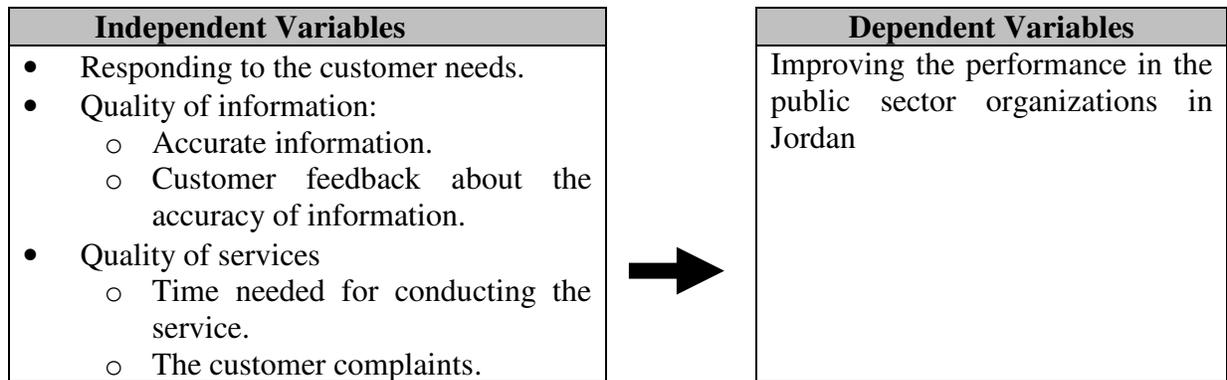
“Performance measurement in the Jordanian public sector organizations regards the customer perspective”. This problem will be discussed according to the following questions:

1. What are the customer needs from public sector organization?
2. How the customers evaluate the services provided by the public sector organizations?
3. What is the role of the customer feedback in improving the public sector performance in Jordan?

Study Hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between responding to the customer needs and improving the performance in the public sector organizations in Jordan.
2. There is no relationship between the quality of the information needed by the customer and improving the performance in the public sector organizations in Jordan.
 - 2.1. There is no relationship between providing the actual information and improving the performance in the public sector organizations in Jordan.
 - 2.2. There is no relationship between the customer feedback about obtaining the accurate information in a certain time and improving the performance in the public sector in Jordan.
3. There is relationship between the quality of the services provided to the customer and improving the performance of the public sector in Jordan.
 - 3.1. There is no relationship between the time needed to conduct the service and improving the performance in the public sector organization in Jordan.
 - 3.2. There is no relationship between the customer complaints about the provided services and improving the performance in the public sector organizations in Jordan.

Study Model:



Theoretical Procedural Definition of the Study Variables

1. The public sector customers, include the citizens and businesses, or in general the whole community.
2. Information: that involves any information needed by the public sector customers. This information may take a form of questions about how can the customer obtain a service, or about the place that he can obtain it, and etc.
3. Accurate information represented by that the message provided by any of the public sector organization (one organization) has to carry the same meaning regardless the information provider.
4. Quality of services: pertains to the time needed to conduct one service, such as how many days or hours the customer has to wait in order to get passport, or how many visits to the organization he needs to have a sketch for his land for example.
5. Customer complaints: This variable reflects the number of complaints catered by the customer as a result of dissatisfaction.
6. Improving the public sector performances: It is the dependent variable of the study. Improving the performance can take many actions, procedures, and developing performance indicators such as:
 - a. Percent completed by due date in effect at the time of completion.
 - b. Percent completed without missing any due dates during the process.
 - c. Percent completed by the original due date.
 - d. Average days completed a head of original due date (MacPherson, 2008).

Previous Studies

1. Nun Berg, 2004, under the title “Managing the civil service, world bank discussion papers”.

The study aimed to discern the impact of decentralization on the public organizations performance. The study indicated that significant changes have been occurring since the mid-1970s in advanced industrialized country public administration. In order to be more flexible, governments have tend to reshape rigid, hierarchical, nineteenth century bureaucracies in to more decentralized, client responsive organizations, compatible with late twentieth century technological and economic requirements. For some countries, as the author says, “reforms have been sweeping representing programs of radical, systematic transformation. Other countries have

pursued more modest strategies of incremental improvements in specific aspects of civil service management while conserving the basic core of administrative structure and practice”. The current study can benefited from Nun Berg study in identifying the core elements of performance improvement which are: decentralization, client responsive, flexibility and technological requirements.

2. The second previous study represents the USA E- Government strategy, by Executives Office of the President of the United States, 2003, under the title “Implementing the Presidents Management Agenda for E- Government.

As any strategy, the executive’s office pointed out the challenges that face the implementing of the strategy, the office of E- Government and IT will operate the following strategies:

- a. Simplify work processes and improve services to citizens.
- b. Use the annual budget process and other OMB requirements to support E-Government implementation. OMB: (Office of Management and Budget).
- c. Improve project delivery through development, recruitment and retention of a qualified IT workforce.
- d. Continue to modernize agency IT management around citizen- centered lines of business.
- e. Engage agency leadership to support E-Government project implementation.

The advantage of this study for the current study is, that E-Government strategy, and an effort in implementing the strategy aims to serve the citizen as a client for the government and its organizations.

3. Low and others, 2008 under the title “Performance Measurement”.

The study aimed to declare the importance of performance measurement in the public sector. The authors pointed out those organizations of all types are increasingly being asked to not only do more with less, but also to prove that they are doing it.

About the public sector organizations need to measure their performance to both manage their operations and to demonstrate to others how well they are doing. Then the others pointed out that the ultimate purposes of performance measurement in the public sector are to increase scrutiny of government spending, both from inside and outside government, and to ensure public trust, with the meaning of that public organizations receiving public funds must clearly achieve and demonstrate continuing improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

Theoretical Back Ground

The theoretical back ground of this study will discuss a number of subtitles which are:

A. Organizational Performance:

Performance as a term means the end results of any activity, for a student for example, reading additional hours leads to a higher degree, here we can say that, reading additional hours is the activity, getting a higher degree is the performance.

Then the activity whether is hours of intense practice before a concert of race or whether it is carrying out job responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as possible, performance is what results from that activity (Robbins and Coulter, 2005, p. 465).

Performance accomplishment may reflect in many areas: Customer service, on time performance and net income and others, because of those managers in all types of businesses are responsible for managing organizational performance. Managers need to understand that the concept “Organizational Performance” is the accumulated end results of all the organizations work processes and activities and they need to understand the factors that lead to high organizational performance.

For the private sector organizations it is easier than the public sector to highlight these factors, because they depend on specific numerical goals, such as sales volume, net income, the number of new customers and so on.

But in the public sector, numerical goals are very limited because of the nature of the public sector organizations processes and activities.

B. Measures of Organizational Performance:

Organizational performance measures as a system can be a powerful means for prioritizing organizational goals and achieving them. Moreover, managers in both public and private sector organizations must know what organizational performance measures will give them the information they need. Organizational productivity, organizational effectiveness, and industry rankings are the most frequently as performance measures.

Performance measurement in the public sector is not easy. Mintzberg has argued that many activities in the public sector precisely because of measurement problems; if everything was clear and every benefit so easily attributable, those activities are well known in the private sector since a long time (Low and others, 2008).

In order to develop a set of organizational performance measures, there are certain steps which are:

1. Start the team: Because public sector organizations are responsible to provide information and services to the government customers (Citizens, businesses, employees) it will be useful to develop a team from all these parties. And this will ensure the fact “measures are best developed collaboratively with those involved in and responsible for what is measured” (Kirkendall, 2008).
2. Describe the organization through developing a work process model, this model involves the core business processes, and how the organization turns inputs to outputs. This frame work is the essential tool for the public sector evaluation, as shown in the table below.

Themes	Examples
Rational and Relevance.	Legitimacy of the role for government consistency with public policies and priorities. Fit in the innovation system. Fit with other government programs.
Management and Efficiency.	Management approach and style. Resource Usage- amount, type, value. Employee Satisfaction. Costs Risks.

Objectives Achievement and Impact.	Results- timeliness, quality, output, client satisfaction. Long- term impacts and effects- economic, social, environmental. Reach- breadth and depth of influence. Number and type of clients.
Future	Service provision alternatives. Strategic choices. Operational choices. Resource requirements.

(Low and others, 2008)

3. Determine Needed Measures: Performance measures are more likely to be used in the strategic planning process. In the public sector organizations there are many problems that related to the variety of government clients, for that measures should guide planners to the problems that require more attention. The role of the team in this stage is to understand the strategic plan in order to become familiar with it, and with any other external requirements for performance measurement (Kerkendall, 2008) planning involves defining the goals and their ranking on base of importance for the organization and its clients and activating the strategy to achieve those goals. This practice must be done at government, organizational, and departmental level, with respect that planning at each level must be coherent with the other levels (wood and others, 2007).
4. Collect the data: Performance management involves the evaluation of progress towards the goals developed in the planning stage; as a result, the team must decide what can be counted, what rating will be used, and how it will be recorded. Customer are the more significant source of these data, that may collected through a number of lines enquiry, possibly including information systems, document review, interviews, workshops, and surveys. The data is analyzed to uncover issues and evaluate performance.
5. Use data: Information is used to evaluate the organization and set goals for the future.

C. Customer Satisfaction in the Public Sector:

The question that any public organization has to ask is: What our customer want, and because governments have many arms inside or outside the country, the public sector organizations serve people in many different ways: for that, the government represented by the departments, ministries, institutions, and other public sector organizations have to break down customers into key groups before their need aspirations and expectations can be defined, as Mori (2004) who suggested a number of segments, housing, benefits, social care, environment, libraries and leisure, education, and community safety (Improvement and development agency for local government, 2005).

After this segmentation, public organizations or the central government itself have to collect data from the customers about their needs either information or services and how they want those needs to be deliver for them. In this area, surveys, focus groups, and depth interviews with users should be used to find out customer views of the services being provided, and then a strategy based on those needs can be established. Customer service in the public sector organizations may be measured by asking questions about; ease of contacts, courtesy, familiar with information requested, understood needs, and promptness. All of these questions are to

examine the ability of a public sector organization in dealing with several categories of customers, another survey should be conducted to measure the usefulness of the provided information and services, and this comprises questions about; relevance, accuracy, timeliness, comprehensive, and ease of access (Kirkendall, 2008).

This type of questions regardless the method used to collect the answers should pinpoint areas of weakness within the public organization that are causing resistance to the performance and creating a shortfall in customer perception, (Wood and others, 2007). Imagine yourself that you want to get a certificate from the ministry of health that you are not a cancer patient; you will go to the ministry to ask about the office who issues this document.

The employee told you to go to the ministry department in your geographic area, after one or two hours you return back to your area and the office told you that this kind of certificates is available only in the ministry. Your expected reaction may take one of those; canceling your need, hot discussion with the first employee, or you may need to push an angry complaint.

The right question after this analysis is: How can public sector deliver customer satisfaction?

Traditionally, governments did not consider residents as customers, because many public sector organizations thought residents would not think of themselves as customers, but rather rate-payers who just wanted services to run properly. In this aspect, Paul cooper, Director of communications at the Institute of Customer service, says he welcomes the development:

“People working in the front line think of people they deal with as customers. It is not just semantics. If you don’t treat the public who use public services as someone who can walk away and take their business elsewhere you are never going to provide a good service” (Improvement and Development Agency for local Government, 2005).

“And that is the way it should be. People have paid for these services through their taxes and can exercise their voice through voting. They are customers and should get satisfaction”.

The public employee has to understand that his salary is to serve people and he is in this position to serve people effectively.

Methodology

- **Type of the Study**

This study is a descriptive quantitative one, for collecting data about the performance of the study sample.

- **Study Population and Sample**

The study population is the Jordanian public sector organizations represented by the Islamic Waqf Institution. That means that the subpopulation is the Islamic Waqf Institution. The sample of the study are the beneficiaries which are represent the customers of the Institution, the sample counted 43 families.

- **Study Instrument**

Secondary data was collected through the books, research and the internet, and the primary data by using a questionnaire which includes questions to the sample individuals to highlight their evaluation for the performance of the Islamic Waqf Institution in Jordan.

Study Results

Statistical Analysis and Hypotheses Testing. Statistical analysis was conducted by using SPSS program. And the results of this analysis pointed out that the agreement degree of beneficiaries for all the statements of the questionnaire was low.

The results showed that the customer's satisfaction from the Islamic waqf Institution in Jordan is very low.

The table below shows the mean and the standard deviation for each statement of the questionnaire.

No.	The Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Agreement
1.	The Islamic Waqf achieves your aspires to improve your life quality.	3.41	0.76	Low
2.	The Islamic Waqf is concerned to wide spread the beneficiaries area.	2.98	0.73	Low
3.	The availability of the professional experience in the employees of the Waqf Property Development Institution has a positive impact on the service level.	2.61	0.87	Low
4.	The Waqf Property Development Institution increases its donations according to high cost of life.	2.36	0.61	Low
5.	The beneficiary can sense the improvements in employees capacities in Waqf through dealing with them.	2.34	0.68	Low
6.	The Waqf Property Development Institution owns a comprehensive database for your benefit.	2.30	0.51	Low
7.	The Waqf Property Development Institution benefited from your data and notices which you provide, and exploit it to improve its services.	2.27	0.50	Low
8.	The Waqf Property Development Institution owns effective communication channels with you.	2.25	0.44	Low
9.	The Waqf Property Development Institution provides aid on objectively basis.	2.25	0.44	Low
10.	The Waqf Property Development Institution responds to the beneficiaries desires through the quality of the provided services.	2.14	0.35	Low
11.	There is a Kind of diversity in the services that provided by the Waqf Property Development Institution according to your needs.	2.09	0.29	Low

Hypotheses Testing

The first major hypothesis: There is no relationship between responding to the customer needs and improving the performance in the public sector organizations.

By applying this hypothesis in the Islamic Waqf Institution in Jordan, the results showed that there is a relationship between the two variables. Statements 6, 11, 12 were the measures for the relationship between the two variables.

The second major hypothesis: There is no relationship between the quality of information needed by the customer and improving the performance, the quality of the information represented by two sub hypotheses which describe the information in certain characteristics which are; actual information, customer feedback about accurate information.

The results of the statistical analysis showed that there is a relationship between providing actual, accurate information by the Islamic Waqf Institution and improving the institutions performance.

And the Islamic Waqf Institution does not provide information with high quality. Statements number 7 and 8 measured this relationship.

The Third hypothesis: There is no relationship between the quality of the services provided to the customer and improving the performance in the public sector organizations in Jordan (The Islamic Waqf Institution).

The poor quality leads the customer for more complaints, and the results showed that there are a significant relationship between the two variables through the statements 1, 4, 5, 10, and 12.

Recommendations

The study suggested the following recommendations

- 1- Development of the investment ability, and attracting new capitals, expansion of accepting viable projects, depending on the private sector in tasks implementation, and keeping the control role.
- 2- Benefiting from the experience of the social security corporation, and the modern methods of investment.
- 3- To create modern and renewable data basis.
- 4- Activation the role of feedback, because it a process that controls the institution's work.
- 5- Providing modern communication devices, and training the employees how to use them through training courses.
- 6- Offering facilities to the investors and attraction of new external Arab Waqfs in addition to facilitating their dealings.
- 7- Intercommunication with the donors and acquainting them with the development in the area of Waqf management.
- 8- Calling for the use of modern marketing methods in the management of the Waqf work.
- 9- Conducting comparative studies with successful experiments and offering them as a model.

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