

The relationship between internal service quality and employees' job satisfaction in sports and youth offices of Golestan Province

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Abstract:

Investigating relationship between internal service quality and employees' job satisfaction in sports and youth offices of Golestan Province was main purpose of this study. The research method in this study was descriptive and correlation method. Statistical population of survey is all all employees of sport and youth in Golestan province (N=180) that 138 employees selected as subject by random sampling. There were two questionnaires used for data collection including Di Xie (2005) internal service quality questionnaire and Visoci and Chrom (1998) questionnaire to measure job satisfaction. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods for data analysis were used. The findings showed that there are positive correlations between dimensions of internal service quality and employees job satisfaction.

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Introduction

The quality of goods and services are now considered an important issue in organizations. Organizations which provide services for clients have recognized the importance of service quality. Research shows that offering high quality services is an important and fundamental strategy for controlling the market, return on investment, cutting production costs, developing productivity, and organization's success in the highly competitive market. Providing high quality services is also a competitive advantage for organizations which leads to organizational growth (Bai et al, 2013). Most of the studies have investigated quality from the viewpoints of customers outside the organization and their results indicate that service quality is one of the most important factors in customer satisfaction. Some employees barely communicate directly with customers in the working environment of organizations. However, communication with colleagues who are in direct contact with customers may affect the quality of services offered to customers outside the organization. Accordingly, many organizations focus on internal service quality in order to develop and improve their performance. The quality of services provided by the members of an organization for each other can add value to the services offered to customers (Di Xie, 2005). Most of the studies performed in Iranian sports environments have examined service quality from the perspective of external customers; this makes research on internal service quality in sports organizations a necessity.

Internal service quality was first introduced by Sasser and Arbiet (1976). They thought of employees as internal customers and argued that the prerequisite to providing high

quality services for external customers are internal customers' satisfaction and offering high quality services to these employees (Liang Wang, 2010). Di Xie (2005) states that internal service quality is a level to which an employee is satisfied with services offered by internal service providers. According to service-profit chain model by Haskett et al (1994), the quality of services provided within the organization acts as a mediator and links employees' satisfaction and loyalty to customers' satisfaction and loyalty, organizational growth and profit (Haskett et al, 1994). Hallowell et al (1998) believe that those organizations which intend to provide their external customers with high quality services must improve their internal service quality (Hallowell et al, 1998). According to Xen You (2003), one aspect of internal service quality is that how employees at one section offer services to their colleagues within the organization. In this regard, the quality of services provided within the organization affects other employees' satisfaction (Xen You, 2003). Meng Xia (2003) states that high quality services within the organization increases employee satisfaction leading to external customers' satisfaction and improvement of organizational performance (Meng Xia, 2003). Liang Wang (2010) suggests that paying attention to internal service quality is a beginning to the satisfaction of employees, shareholders, external customers, and finally to the improvement of organizational performance (Liang Wang, 2010). Davis (1994) states that the quality of offered services within the organization is one of the most important components of the strategy of service quality within organizations which in long-term will lead to cost reduction and organization's profit (Davis, 1994). As mentioned, internal service quality may affect employees' satisfaction with the services received from other colleagues and sections of the organization.

Research indicates the importance of internal service quality. Qin-Nan (2009) investigated the relationship between

internal service quality, job satisfaction, and the performance of employees in car insurance companies in Taiwan. He reported a positive and significant relationship between various levels of internal service quality, employees' job satisfaction, and the performance of such companies. This means that offering high quality services within organizations leads to higher employees' satisfaction which in turn leads to improved performance in long term. Yue-Xia (2009) examined the impacts of internal service quality on customer satisfaction in Taiwanese tax offices; he showed that both internal service quality and internal customers' satisfaction have direct and positive impacts on external customers and enhance the profit and performance of such organizations. In an experimental research, Liang Wang (2010) examined the impact of internal service quality on the performance of 105 tourist hotels in Taiwan. Employees' satisfaction was taken as the mediator variable. Results showed that internal service quality had positive impact on employees' satisfaction and that higher satisfaction levels had positive and significant impacts on the organizational performance of these hotels. In a research titled as "internal service quality and job satisfaction synergies for performance improvement" Pantouvakis (2011) concluded that there is a positive relationship between service quality within organization and employees' job satisfaction.

Given the importance of sports either public or professional, sports organizations have a special position worldwide. The performance and quality of the plans offered by these organization scan affect different groups of the society. Offices of sports and youth are new organizations which are the main institutions of and influential on all sports event in a city; they have extensive contacts with various organizations which affect are affected by such offices. Due to the newness of these offices, proper management and recognition of factors influential on their performance can play an important role in the success of these offices. They need to institutionalize

internal service quality in order to improve their performance. Moreover, by doing so, employees will be able to offer high quality services to both their colleagues and external customers; this will result in employees' higher job satisfaction and finally organization's success.

Methodology

In view of the goal, the research is applied (functional), and in view of methodology, this research has descriptive, correlation method which was performed by field approach. The population of the study consisted of all employees of sport and youth in Golestan province (N=180). The sample size was considered by using random selection method that according to Morgan table 138 employees was selected as subjects.

For collecting data, two standard questionnaires were used, internal service quality questionnaire developed by Di Xie (2005) with 21 questions (It includes 3 components: internal service quality at the individual levels, internal service quality at the division levels and internal service quality at the organizational levels) that have closed answer and job satisfaction questionnaire (1998) developed by Visoci and Chrom's (1998) with 22 questions that have closed answer. The content validity of the questionnaires was approved by five professors of sports management. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted. The results showed a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.84$ for internal service quality questionnaire and $\alpha=0.88$ for job satisfaction questionnaire, which indicated the consistency of measurement. A demographic data sheet was used to collect the data on personal information including age, sex and level of education. SPSS software (Ver. 16) was used to analyze the data. As to the statistical measures, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and tabulations were

used to describe the data. Inferential statistics including Pearson correlation formula was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

The results showed that 70.9 percent of the subjects had less than 40 years. 62.3 percent of the subjects had B. C and higher degrees and more subjects were male (60.9 %).

Table 1 Description of study variables

Variable	Mean	S. D
Internal Service Quality at the Individual Levels	4.45	0.64
Internal Service Quality at the Division Levels	5.60	0.52
Internal Service Quality at the Organizational Levels	4.53	0.59
Total Internal Service Quality	4.74	0.67
Job Satisfaction	3.45	0.59

As shown in Table 1, the mean internal service quality at the individual levels was 4.45, the mean of internal service quality at the division levels was 5.60 and the mean of internal service quality at the organizational levels was 3.98. As the maximum internal service quality score was found to be 4.74 out of the total 7. Also the mean of job satisfaction was 3.45.

Table 2 Relationship between the levels of internal service quality and job satisfaction

Components	Job Satisfaction		
	n	r	P
Internal Service Quality at the Individual Levels	138	0.428	0.001
Internal Service Quality at the Division Levels	138	0.368	0.001
Internal Service Quality at the Organizational Levels	138	0.384	0.001

Regarding the results in table 2, internal service quality at the individual levels was significantly related to job satisfaction ($r=0.428$, $P<0.001$), internal service quality at the division levels was also significantly related to job satisfaction ($r=0.368$,

P<0.001). In addition, there was positive and significant relationship between internal service quality at the organizational levels and job satisfaction ($r=0.384$, $P<0.001$).

Table 3 Results from the regression analysis

Variable	R	R2	Adjusted R2	t	β
Internal Service Quality	0.54	0.49	0.47	5.31	0.62

Note: Significant at: * $P < 0.001$

Result of regression (Table 3) revealed that internal service quality ($\beta = 0.62$, $P < 0.001$) has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusion

Inferential analysis of data show that there is a positive and significant relationship between internal service quality at an individual level and job satisfaction; this is in agreement with the findings of Bai et al (2013), Liang Wang (2012) and Yue-Xia (2009). Improvement of service quality within the organization has attracted managers and researchers. In this regard, Liang Wang (2010) argues that companies and organizations which initiate internal service quality at the level of their own employees make them satisfied with their job and affect organizations' performance. Internal service quality has attracted the attention of industrial and business managers for a long time while this issue is relatively new in sports organizations especially Iranian ones. On the significance of internal service activity at the individual level, Liang Wang (2010) states that the key to success of hospitality industry in Taiwan is the training of employees in order to provide high quality services to other sections and their colleagues. There are also various factors which affect the quality of services offered among the employees of an organization. Di Xie (2005) refers to organizational commitment as one of the most

important factors influential on the quality of services offered among an organization's employees. In addition, Haskett et al (1994) and Qin-Nan (2009) consider employees' satisfaction and loyalty, and employees' job satisfaction respectively as important factors in quality of these services. In general, increase of the quality of services offered among an organization's employees leads to higher job satisfaction.

Results of the present study show that there is a positive and significant relationship between internal service quality at the section levels and job satisfaction; this is in line with findings of Bai et al (2013), Liang Wang (2012) and Yue-Xia (2009). A significant aspect of organizations is having sections with each one specialized in a particular responsibility. Yue-Xia (2009) believes that the quality of services provided by a section for other sections and employees within an organization affects their satisfaction with the services and ultimately affects organization's performance. Hallowell et al (1996) divide the factors affecting the quality of services provided by different sections of an organization into financial and nonfinancial factors. They argue that although financial incentives have impacts on the quality services provided by employees in one section, nonfinancial factors such as setting goals by the section in line with the organization's goals, decision-making power, and effective communication with other section have greater impacts on these services. Since different sections provide and receive various services, factors which can increase service quality will affect employees' satisfaction.

Results also show that there is a positive and significant relationship between internal service quality and at the organization level and job satisfaction; this is in agreement with the findings of Bai et al (2013), Liang Wang (2012) and Yue-Xia (2009). The quality of internal services provided within an organization is the outcome of services offered by its employees and sections. Yue-Xia (2009) argues that only if the organization supports will the quality of internal services be

effective at individual and section levels. Liang Wang (2010) believes that increasing internal service quality within the organization can in long term improve employees' job satisfaction and job performance and reduce costs and ultimately enhance organizational performance.

Given the findings of the present research, the following are suggested:

1. Similar to measurement of the quality of services offered to external customers, managers also should measure the quality of services offered among the employees and try to enhance it.
2. Managers should clearly specify the quality expected from all the section and be informed about the quality of services offered among different sections.
3. Managers should identify and compensate for the factors which make employees dissatisfied with the received quality from their colleagues.

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