

THE ROLE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN SERVICES

Irina Olimpia SUSANU

irinasusanu@gmail.com

Nicoleta CRISTACHE

cristache.nicoleta@yahoo.de

Viorel SUSANU

Adrian MICU

mkdradrianmicu@yahoo.com

Dunarea de Jos University Galati, Romania

According to theorists, customer satisfaction is a subjective concept, difficult to measure, difficult to quantify. Aspects related to its quantification arising from: diversity of factors which influence the satisfaction, difficulty interpretation of the results, the positive trend of results, obstacles related to the results transformation into action, gaps regarding the tracking poll results within the organization. Systematic evaluation of customer requirements but and their satisfaction offers to the organization a important information about the extent to which their expectations were met as well as the opportunities for improvement and development of its business. However, the collected data revealed the necessity to implement corrective, preventive or improvement actions applicable to processes within the organization, quantifying the progress of the organization on its way for the achieving "total quality".

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1. Introduction

The healthcare system creates its own image through the core values it promotes as well as through the ethical principles it adopts and implements. In this respect, we are speaking especially about equity as a concept that is closely related to the individual's basic rights to health care and accepting it as a bedrock principle of medical ethics – which is implemented and enforced by each and every active member of this system.

Access to medical care is determined by the convergence between supply and demand for this type of services, disparities regarding healthcare access are mainly due to four reasons: ethnical or racial, economic, including here the direct costs undergo by the population (co-payments, costs related to treatment and in-hospital treatment) as well indirect costs such as fares, waiting time, improper placement of healthcare facilities, uneven quality of services of the same type.

Therefore an organization, the health care system respectively can create a favourable image by implementing and enforcing the health right of population and also by equally enforcing the other principles of medical ethics.

Characteristic of the mass industrialization process, frequently relied in advertising messages, within the recent decades, quality has been taken over in public policies being increasingly present in the discourses of the social actors. It speaks more about the quality of European policy, European directives regarding the quality, about quality standards, about quality accreditations, certifications and recognitions.

Today, more than ever, the movement of goods and services appears to be globally organized, so to ensure the minimum quality requirements thereof, foreshadowing what Juran, one of the founder's quality management, anticipated a few decades ago: "21st century will be the century of quality".

One of the biggest challenges which the company has to face today, is the need to develop and maintain the citizen's confidence in their institutions. From this perspective, the process of creating a robust and credible legal system, plays an important role, and the forensic quality benefits and their actual results helps to substantiate and strengthen it.

Forensics is an integral part of the health care, constituting a distinct field of reference and being in direct dependence with regulations and concerns from the justice field. Forensic activity is conducted

for the benefit of the population, of the investigating and prosecuting authorities as well as the courts, which integrates forensic product in the justice process.

Given the specificity of public service which does not allows for more suppliers in a given territorial area and thus a competitive activity, the question which naturally arises is whether it is justified a concern for the quality management.

Moreover, since complying with legal provisions and professional rules, which sometimes runs counter to the beneficiary's needs, in this sector, the quality of provided service, measured by customer satisfaction, is gaining particular valences.

On the other hand, for a public institution to be considered credible, it must guarantee the minimum quality requirements for the processes necessary for the provision of all services needed by its customers in a consistent manner and to inspire confidence.[Schin, 2013]²⁹ From this perspective, all processes developed within a public institution, starting to the management processes ending with the operational and support (supply, maintenance, etc.) ones, must constitute a unitary and tightly controlled system. However, studies show that identifying our customers' expectations, specific process optimization, continuous improvement of the personnel, the development of communication materials and techniques, are elements designed to provide the quality of the services and products of any kind.

Therefore, the adoption of a public a management system based on the principles of quality management, is likely to ensure the confidence of its customers.

According to the ISO 9000 family of standards, an organization working within a quality management system, is judged to be "focused on quality". ISO 9000 standards contain a number of requirements on quality management that can be applied to any organization regardless of its object of activity, both public sector and private sector.

The importance of adopting this model of quality management system lies in several benefits, such as:

- Efficient use of personnel, equipment and resources in general;
- Communication and teamwork stimulation, with important implications for the organization's personnel (mainly psychological);
- Awareness among personnel of the need to achieve quality services, developing such quality-oriented organizational culture;
- Eliminating dysfunctions in the process of organization
- Improving organizational climate, relationships between employees etc.

According to SR EN ISO 9000: 2006 - "Quality management systems - Fundamentals and vocabulary", quality management coordinates activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality. Coordination and control in terms of production quality generally includes establishment of the quality policy and quality objectives, quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement.

In specialized literature here are many definitions regarding the quality management. Thus, Juran defines quality management in terms of "quality trilogy", considering to be "how we get quality" [Juran, J.M., 2001]. According to him, the quality management includes three main processes: quality planning, quality control and quality improvement. These three processes are interrelated.

Another quality management specialist, J. Kélada defines quality management law, a set of activities to achieve goals through optimal use of resources" [Kélada, J., 199], referring to the following activities: planning, coordinating, organizing, controlling and ensuring quality. Thus, the quality management is the identification process and management activities necessary for achieving quality within an organization.

In general, the adoption of a particular type of management system is a strategic decision. Design and implementation of a quality management system within an organization are influenced by different needs but also by specific objectives, by the size and structure of the organization as well as its provided typology of products/services.

In the ISO 9000 family of standards vision, the satisfaction and overcome customer expectations is a primary objective for the organization due to the fact that they are the "heart" of the quality management system [Margerand, J., Gillet-Goinard, F., 2006].

²⁹ George Schin, „A local development project in the framework of public policies focused on regional development strategies”, Conference Proceedings Risk in Contemporary Economy, 2013, ISSN 2067-0532
<http://www.rce.feaa.ugal.ro/images/stories/RCE2013/papers/Schin.pdf>

Systematic evaluation of customer requirements but and their satisfaction offers to the organization a important information about the extent to which their expectations were met as well as the opportunities for improvement and development of its business. However, the collected data revealed the necessity to implement corrective, preventive or improvement actions applicable to processes within the organization, quantifying the progress of the organization on its way for the achieving "total quality".

Far from being interested only in user's satisfaction, total quality management invites organizations to a holistic perspective on quality, which includes all involved parties: state, public, community, customers, beneficiaries etc.

Derived from marketing, the idea of customer satisfaction is reflected in the famous Juran's concept of "fitness for use" as well as the quality standard definition contained in ISO 9000, according to which the quality represents all characteristics of an entity that gives it the ability to satisfy the expressed and implied needs. This new approach reflects a focus of the quality concept on the beneficiary requirements, in contrast with the traditional view of quality, in which was appreciated only depending on degree of compliance with the specifications.

In this context, "it is increasingly obvious that our world needs a credible system for measuring the value of what customers consider to products and services" [Paraschivescu, A.O., 2008]. Therefore, an organization should implement a system to monitor and collect information relating to customer satisfaction, which should be correlated with data from its other processes and their systematic analysis should provide information on performance of the management system adopted.

According to theorists, customer satisfaction is a subjective concept, difficult to measure, difficult to quantify. Aspects related to its quantification arising from: diversity of factors which influence the satisfaction, difficulty interpretation of the results, the positive trend of results, obstacles related to the results transformation into action, gaps regarding the tracking poll results within the organization [Furtunescu F., 2007].

2. Metodology

Starting with 2010, a quality management system has been implemented within Galati SJML. Orientation towards quality has been immediately reflected in the quality of the issued forensic documents and thus, significantly improving the institution's image within the local community.

To assess the implications of the quality management system implementation in terms of customer perception, we have proceeded to periodically survey customers of SJML Galati, for a period of 4 years starting with 2010, when the quality management system was implemented within this institution.

The method used was based on a questionnaire, annually applied on samples of 50 individuals, randomly selected from among the direct and indirect beneficiaries of SJML Galati services. In this sense, to evaluate the customer satisfaction we designed "Questionnaire for assessing customer satisfaction," structured to achieve the most relevant aspects related to the customer satisfaction. For its development we started from the operationalization of the "services quality" concept in the following dimensions: staff solicitude to the customers' requirements, customer communication, promptness in service delivery, deadlines, confidentiality of results.

When setting up the sample for ensuring an appropriate representativeness of all types of Galati SJML beneficiaries by including both persons on first contact with Galati SJML services, and 'traditional' clients. Moreover, we aimed to ensure a representativeness by type of required service/expertise in order to cover all activity fields of SJML Galati.

3. Results and discussions

In terms of quality of services provided, the results are striking: in proportion of 72% (compared to 45% in 2012, 53% in 2011 and 38% in 2010) respondents considered the services "excellent", while 28 % (compared to 55% in 2012, 29% in 2011 and 54% in 2010) of respondents appreciate it as "very good". As in the previous analysis, there is no registered customers who appreciate quality as "good", compared to 18% in 2011 and 8% in 2010.

Compared with results obtained from other assessments related to the customer satisfaction, there is a significant increase of the SJML Galati customer satisfaction. Thus, their satisfaction has gradually come to be placed in the upper extreme of the "satisfaction axis" with a share of 72% (excellent). There is a decrease of customers who appreciate quality category as "very good", while a increase of the segment of those who consider "great". Unlike previous years, when we noticed a decrease of the customers segment which considered the quality of services as "excellent" category, amid increasing the customers segment which considers the services "very good", in the current year we registered a stabilization of consumer confidence in the quality of Galati SJML services, marked a very high proportion of those who value the SJML Galati services as "excellent". It retains the absence of the customers segments

who appreciate quality SJML Galati services as "good", "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". In order to identify the aspects where we could make improvements for to fully satisfying its customers' requirements, in the operationalization of and measurement of 'the services quality', we have also introduced other items through which the customers were able to indicate any "points neuralgic" of Galati SJML's activity which can affect the quality of its services. Therefore, we have requested the client's opinion regarding the responsiveness related to the takeover application, timeliness of the execution of the requested expertise, the kindness of providing additional information, respecting the deadlines.

The staff solicitude is reflected into the questions regarding staff responsiveness of taking over the request, the promptness of performing the required expertise (response time) and the kindness with which the personnel takes customer request and provide him the necessary legal information needed. As regards the responsiveness of taking over the request, out of the total respondents, 97% said they were "completely satisfied" (compared to 95% in 2012, 91% by 2011, 100% in 2010), only 3% consider themselves "satisfied" (compared to 5% in 2012, 9% in 2011, 0% in 2010), while there is no "undecided", there is no "partially unsatisfied" or "total unsatisfied" (similar to the analysis above). The longitudinal analysis of customer satisfaction towards this aspect, indicates a slight improvement of customer satisfaction over the past year, the percentage of those who said them "totally satisfied" has increased at the expense of those who declare themselves "satisfied". These results show a very good relationship with the personnel which receives the client's requests.

As regards the way the staff provides the necessary legal information to the clients, the results still show high customer satisfaction towards this aspect: 97% are "completely satisfied" (compared to 100% in 2012, 94% in 2011 and 92% in 2010). Even if this year has reappeared the "satisfied" customer category with a share of 3% (similar with 2011), the share of customers „total satisfied” denotes a good perception of the aspect of SJML Galati service quality. Similar to previous analyses, there are no customers "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", there is not any "partially unsatisfied" (compared to 3% in 2011, 0% in 2010), or "completely unsatisfied" (compared to 3% in 2011, 0% in 2010).

Regarding the promptness in expertise required execution, 85% of respondents said "totally satisfied" (compared to 79% in 2012, 74% in 2011 and 75% in 2010), 13% consider themselves "satisfied" (from 18% in 2012, 21% in 2011 and 17% in 2010), while 3% are "undecided" (similar with 2012 and 2011, 8% in 2010). Unlike previous analysis, we notice the increase of 'completely satisfied' clients towards this aspect at the expense of "satisfied" ones. Similar to last two analyses, customer share is considered neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, it remains at the same low level (3%), meanwhile there are no "partially satisfied" customers (compared to 3% in 2011).

The longitudinal analysis of customer satisfaction towards this aspect, indicates a gradual increase of customer satisfaction, the percentage of those who have said they are "totally satisfied" have increased at the expense of who consider themselves "satisfied" and "partially satisfied", while the proportion of those who are "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" remains constant.

In addition, we have pursued to collect our customers' opinions related to the quality of the forensic performance. This reflects in the questions regarding the deadlines and maintaining confidentiality issues. In this case, the following results were registered:

- Regarding the deadlines, 82% of respondents declared themselves "totally satisfied" (compared to 79% in 2012, 85% in 2011 and 75% in 2010), 13% declared themselves "satisfied" (compared to 21% in 2012, 6% in 2011 and 8% in 2010).
- Unlike previous analysis we faced new customers "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" type (versus 0% in 2012, 6% in 2011 and 8% in 2010).
- On the other hand, similar to previous analyses, no customers "partially satisfied" was registered (compared to 0% in 2012 and 2011, 8% in 2010), 'totally dissatisfied' clients (versus 0% in 2012, 3% in 2011, 0% in 2010).
- The result analysis offers the prospect of significant improvements to customer satisfaction towards this issue. Although a share increase of „total satisfied" customers appears, also the "undecided" customers category has reappeared, which indicates the existence of non-accidental situations regarding the deadlines that were "fined" for questioned customers.

Regarding the maintaining confidentiality issue, as in previous analyses, in total rate of 100%, respondents have declared as "totally satisfied" towards this aspect. Unlike other items, we have noticed a consistency in terms of SJML Galati customer perception, the satisfaction of which is the peak of general customer satisfaction.

Another aspect of this approach was followed in measuring customer satisfaction by building and construct an index of satisfaction.

4. Conclusions

Along with innovation, employee satisfaction, environmental protection and quality management, customer satisfaction is a major non-financial performance indicators of an organization.

Implications of implementing the quality management system are visible in time, a certain period is necessary in order to strengthen the consumer confidence in the consistency of the services quality.

Unlike the results of the first evaluation of customer satisfaction when has slightly throw-back of the customer perception towards to the employee's solicitude has been registered, in 2013 there is an improvement of this aspect, the most striking manifestation towards to personnel responsiveness shown in the taking over request process and readiness to execute. Further, the perception of most respondents to this dimension of service quality is maintained in the positive half of the "satisfaction axis", tending towards to the upper extreme limit.

In regard to the quality forensic performance, similar to the previous years, when there were successive improvements in customer perceptions, in 2013 is occurring a consolidation of the results from the previous years, with a slight increase of customer satisfaction within specified time limits. In this case, the perception of the most respondents is maintained in the positive half of the "satisfaction axis", to the upper part.

The increases registered by the customer satisfaction index also shows a better position in the perception of Galati SJML's customers in relation to its quality services.

Even if the first polling customers, the perceptions of the quality of Galati SJML services/products was very good, it took two years for them to be convinced that the high quality of Galati SJML services/products is not accidental, but represents a constancy.

By obtaining the "ISO 9001 certification", we manage to achieved an assessment of the quality management, well as the best practices within the organization, but also an increased Galati SJML's customer requirements towards to the quality of the performed forensic, as reflected in the development of customer satisfaction within the 4 analysed years.

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