

The Employees' Satisfaction in Public Switching Centers of Telecommunication Service Providers

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Abstract

A satisfaction of employees in switching centers (both public switching telephone networks and mobile switching centers) has been investigated. Those employees have significantly impacted the quality of services and the customers' loyalty of service providers especially in voice communication due to the requirement of real time communication in the aspect of technology and the red ocean market in the marketing aspect. This study has been focused on emotion, attitudes and behaviors of employees in the maintenance and service departments from private companies and state enterprises operating as service providers in telecommunication business. The results provide some significant concerns that can be used to improve or fine-tune the service and maintenance teams of service providers in achieving the customer relationship management goals.

Keywords: Switching center, Employees' satisfaction, Telecommunication business, Customer relationship management

1. Introduction

It has been well known that telecommunication technology has been continuously and considerably developed and widely used for fulfilling the human's needs such as telephone, internet and computer network, etc. By this reasons the advanced telecommunication and innovation regarding to this technology take a well-built stepping stone in boundless personal communication as a globalization. Therefore, when the demands of services have been increased, the quality of services must be also improved consecutively to better serve all customers. One of the factors that significantly impact the quality of services is the improvement of the staffs' efficiency in the organization.

It can be noted that in communication business the main profits of this business are mainly generated by selling services such as cell phone, calling packages, Triple Play Services, etc. However, services can normally be separated into before and after sell services. The after sell services notably impact the customer loyalty. Moreover, this service is usually one of the key factors for customers' decision to switch among providers (churn rate). Many service providers in telecommunication services then try to use both market and technical strategies in order to keep their current customers in terms of price and quality. The word "quality" implies both network (including all equipment and components in telecommunication systems) and peopleware. In this paper the satisfaction of employees in maintenance and service department is studied. The scope is in investigating the key factors that affect the behaviors and decision making of their jobs. The results are very useful for service provider organization in reducing the turn-over rate, improving the inefficient staffs, and also saving budgets in human resource management.

2. Literature Review

The employees' satisfaction have been defined by some researchers [1, 2, 6, 11] as a good feeling and behavior with their jobs in a good sense resulting from many factors such as job partners, job characteristic

and environment. However, these factors should make them satisfy and achieve their efficiency to their organizations. This study investigates the maintenance and services department employees' satisfaction by using the theory of Maslow's i.e., the theory of human and motivation [11], two-factor theory of motivation [9] and trait and satisfaction factor theories [8, 15] adopting with a study of factors effecting job satisfaction and attitudes [16]. The three factors that impact on employees' satisfaction, i.e., personal characteristics, job characteristics and environment are focused on this research. The management factor is excluded from the scope of this research since this study focuses on the satisfaction of employees working in switching centers which normally located far away from the head office.

3. Conceptual Framework

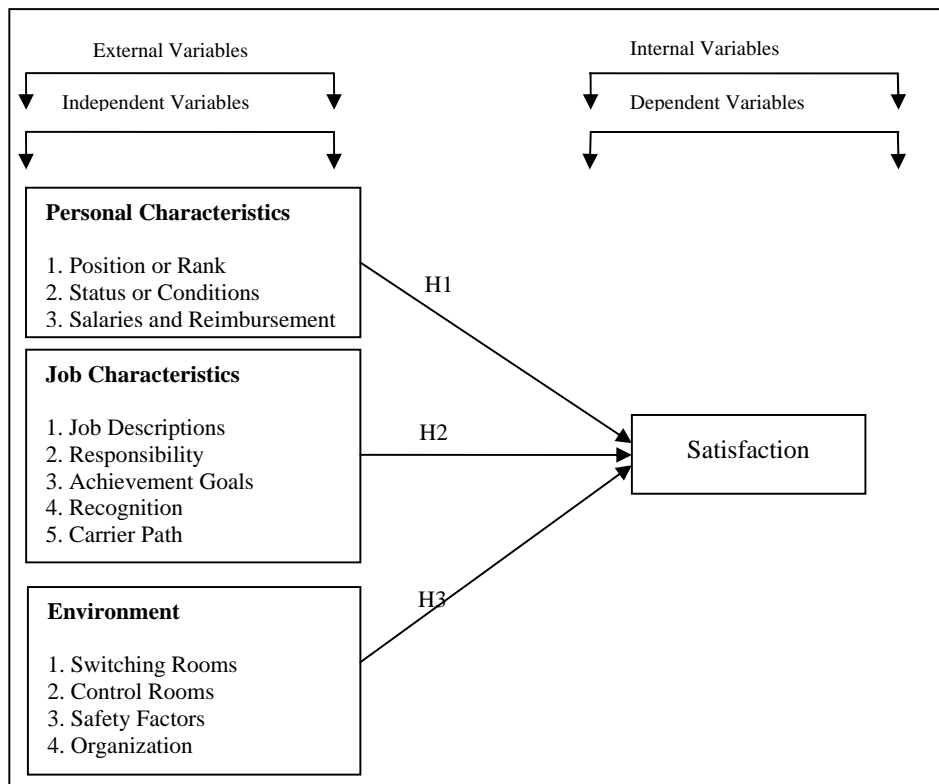


Fig.1 Conceptual framework model

Figure 1 depicts an overview of the conceptual framework. There are three factors significantly affected maintenance and services department employees satisfaction as mention above. To test the framework, the following hypotheses are developed.

H1: Personal characteristics positively relates to satisfaction of employees in switching network centers

H2: Job characteristics positively relates to satisfaction of employees in switching network centers

H3: Environment positively relates to satisfaction of employees in switching network centers

4. Research Methodology

An empirical study using a questionnaire is administered to technicians and engineers of maintenance and services department of mobile switching centers for mobile communication and public switching telecommunication network centers in both private companies and state enterprises' service providers in Thailand. This study focuses on seven companies which are currently operating namely Advance Info Services Plc., Total Access Communication Plc., True Move Company, TOT Plc., True Corporation Plc.

and Samart Communication Service Co., Ltd. because those companies have themselves network switching centers and employ their own staffs for maintenance and services these centers as well.

The constructs in figure 1 are measured using adapted existing instruments in previous researches [16] to fit the purpose of this study. Five-point Likert's scale is used to examine participants' responses to these statements. These instruments have been tested for validity and reliability by some professionals in telecommunication engineering and information system. The instrument is then pilot-tested by experts from many local firms. Each of them completed the questionnaire and provided comments on the clarity and relevance of questions, together with suggestions for improvement. These comments and suggestions are used to improve the questionnaire.

The instrument had been send out by faxes, internet and postal services, selected by using quota sampling methodology among switching centers in those service provider companies as mention above. The returned instrument had been covered the expected population perfectly.

5. Data Analysis

To test hypotheses, SPSS for window version 13 is used to analyze the data. For testing relationship stated in the conceptual framework model in figure 1, multiple linear regressions method is used with the level of significance 0.05.

The result indicates that two factors namely personal characteristics and environment significantly affect employees' satisfaction in maintenance and service department of switching centers. Moreover, there are interaction between personal characteristics and environment characteristics.

6. Discussion

Due to the three main factors are set as the independent variables, i.e., personal, job and environmental factors, the analysis is then performed in five steps

First, the effects of those three main factors (H1, H2 and H3) as depicted in figure 1 toward employees' satisfaction in maintenance and services department of switching centers are studied. It can be shown that personal (H1) and environmental (H3) factors affect the employees' satisfaction while the job characteristics (H2) have not directly affected the employees' satisfaction in switching centers. As you would have thought the occupations in maintenance and services department of switching centers are usually skilled employment (they have to pursue their diplomas or degrees specifically for those kinds of career); therefore, people who apply for normally know the job characteristics ahead of time. Also noted that to achieve the employees' satisfaction in switching centers, the organization should take an account for both personal and environment factors together in consideration.

Table 1 Result of multiple linear regression tests for satisfaction * P < 0.05

Regression Tests	Adjust R Square	Coefficient	Model Significance	Accept Hypothesis
Satisfaction	0.346		F = 20.493	
Personal Factors		-0.196		Accept H1
Environmental Factors		-0.295		Accept H3
Personal and Environmental Factors		0.976		

Second, the details of personal characteristics are investigated including of position or rank, status or conditions and salaries and reimbursement respectively. It can be shown that status or conditions of their works have an effect on their satisfaction. This can be explained that job status or conditions are the attitudes or feeling regarding to the enduring, pleasure and arrogant to their job which can be from many factors such as allowance, organization reputation.

Third, the environmental factors are examined more deeply which includes the environment of switching rooms, control rooms, safety factors during the operation and organization environment. The results show that switching rooms, safety factors during the operation and organization environment significantly impact the employees' satisfaction. The reason is those employees typically or mainly work in control or monitoring room. When the systems are malfunctioned, they have to operate or maintain in the switching room which a lot of electronic equipment is located, and having many or less electromagnetic wave. Hence they need some safety policies or standards and security systems for both humans and equipment. While in the control room, they psychologically believe having more safety than in the switching room. Moreover they believe that the well known or recognized organization (having reputation) should have a good management system and should have high-quality safety standards in working.

Fourth, the effects of job satisfaction are also studied in details although it has been shown an insignificant impact the employees' satisfaction which includes job descriptions, responsibility, achievement goals, recognition and carrier path. Unsurprisingly, the three factors namely achievement goals, recognition and their carrier paths have considerably effects the employees' satisfaction in maintenance and service department of switching centers since even though the job characteristics are not significantly impact the satisfaction due to the skilled employment but these employees need to achieve their goals and carrier path. Besides, human beings need the recognition from others to live in society. Thus the recognition is still one of the needs to live in.

Finally, all details of the main three factors are examined to describe the models. The results show that status or conditions, salaries and reimbursement, recognition, switching room environment, organization environment are the main effects toward employees' satisfaction of maintenance and services department in switching centers of service providers. Indicating that these employees believe that working with a prominent organization will make them secured on their job and, proud to work with and also provide those good salaries and reimbursement. In addition, recognition as professionals from outside and from a supervisor or colleagues also affects the employees' satisfaction which agrees with Maslow's theory.

However it can be shown from table 1 that this model can be explained only 36.4% of employees' satisfaction variation. This means that there must be other factors that affect the employees' satisfaction such as outside factors for example telecommunication liberalization policy, regulations from national telecommunication committee, politics, etc. or some others inside organization factors such as management policy [16]. In addition it is worth to note that although the job characteristics have not significantly impact the employees' satisfaction in switching centers, some characteristics of job such as achievement goals, recognition and carrier path considerably affect the employees' satisfaction which generally are the basic needs of human beings as described in Maslow's theory. Also noted that comparing to the result in [4], the employees' satisfactions of different departments in an organization especially in the service business such as in telecommunication markets have some major different concerns. Therefore, in evaluating the performance or even when the organization would like to reorganize the structure, the top level management should consider with awareness in each sectors of the company since there is no one-size-fit-all strategy in the real world.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study it can be found that personal characteristics and environmental factor have positively impact with employees' satisfaction working in switching centers. Also there are significant relationships between personal characteristics and environmental factor. Therefore the results of this study can be shown to be given by figure 2.

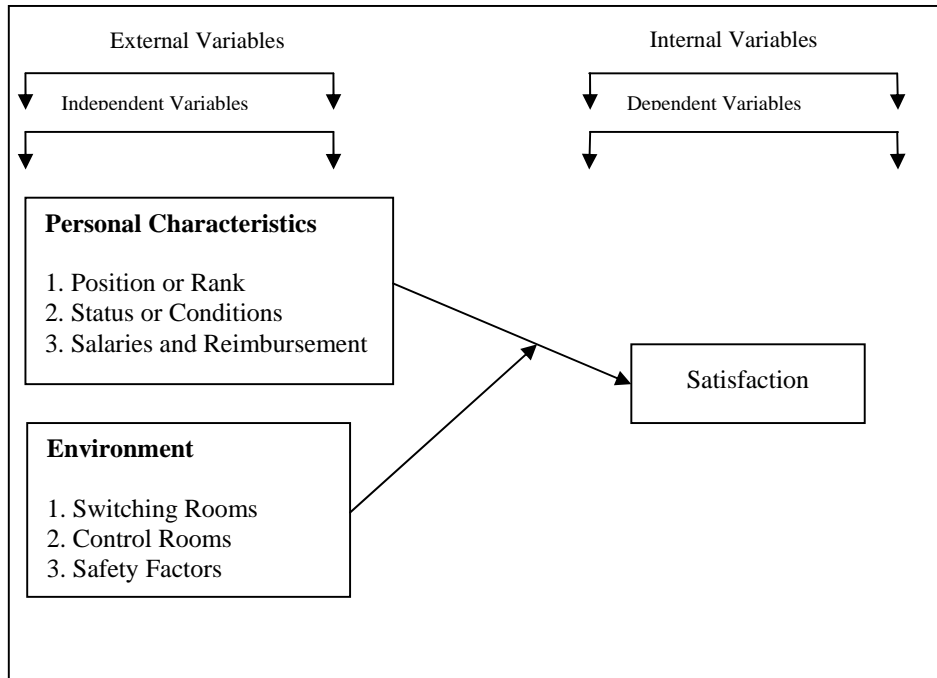


Fig.2 Revised conceptual framework model

It is recommended to retest the model since there might be other constructs affecting employees' satisfaction. It will be valuable to explore those factors that affect employees' satisfaction. In addition the retest should focus on each factor for adopted with employees in other business.

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