

Customer-focused service management as an approach of enhancing service culture among fast-food chains

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ABSTRACT

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Current study aimed at examining the influence of customer-focused service management on spreading service culture inside the organization. In order to test the eligibility of such hypotheses quantitative survey was distributed on (278) workers within fast food restaurants in Amman- Jordan. The sample contained marketing managers and sales representatives from the chose international chain fast-food restaurants. Results of study indicated that there is an influence of customer-focused service management on service culture that is attributed to leadership and people working in the organization, it was meant leadership and due to its close connection to employees can help in spreading awareness regarding service quality and people themselves should have the in-depth awareness of the importance of quality in general and service quality in particular. Study recommended that service culture shouldn't be spread among frontline employees only, it should surpass to the leaders, middle management, higher management and CEO, and Understanding customer expectations has to rhyme with organizational mission and vision; employees must have full understanding of their organization's mission and vision before starting to understand service culture.

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1. Introduction

Customer Service is one of the most important aspects that modern organizations began to grow interest in especially productivity in terms of the level of production of services or commodities. Customer service is considered to be the main source of profit by its role in maximizing sales, increasing its size by increasing demand (Liao et al., 2009). Fitzsimmons et al. (2008) argued that it is the responsibility of various organizations to follow many rules and principles that achieve customer satisfaction and increase the attractiveness of new customers, which reflects very well on the development and progress of the organizations. Achieving customer service means that the organization has service quality which means the organization is well designed and delivers the service properly from the first time, performs better next time and achieves customer satisfaction at the same time, and enjoys competitive advantages over the service provided by similar organizations. From another perspective (Talib, et al., 2011) service quality was seen as achieving conformity with the customer's specification through measuring the level of service capacity that reaches the customer and whether it has the ability to meet its expectations, the delivery of a good service means to meet the expectations set by the customer.

1.1 Literary Gap

Organizations are increasing their interest in creating a customer oriented culture due to its positive influence quality awareness of an organization. In a study by Gebauer and Kowalkowski (2012) it was revealed that organizations with the new technologies and worldwide developments are dividing their attention between two main spectrums which are the service oriented and customer oriented. It appeared through the study that having a customer oriented management of services can develop organizational performance through changing how employees look at the service and how it presented before the

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customers. Krishnakumary and Thampi (2015) supported the same allegations arguing that among the healthy steps that an organization may embrace is to increase its staff's awareness regarding customer satisfaction and interest which can be reflected on the internal culture of how a customer is evaluated in the organization. Abu Amuna et al. (2017) notes to the fact that there are many critical success factors that plays a role in defining how customer relationship to the organization is ruled. Author also added that managing those factors may have a part in defining the nature of organizational culture in terms of defining and understanding service and quality. Based on the above argument, the current study sought to examine the influence of Customer-Focused Service Management in defining and increasing organizational culture in terms of service.

1.2 Service Quality Management

The concept of total quality management is one of the modern management concepts that aim to continuously improve and develop performance by responding to the client's requirements. Many people understand quality as being aware of 'good quality' or 'original material' and meant to mean how the opposite of quantity means number. Ullah at al. (2016) Believe that quality is the complete satisfaction of the customer, while according to Shanks (2001) quality is seen as conforming to the requirements; Campanerut et al. (2010) has confirmed that quality is accuracy of use as perceived by the beneficiary while Hakonen and Jaakkola (2012) looked at the quality expected degree of consistency or accreditation fit Market at low cost. We conclude from these definitions that (quality) relates to the perspective of the customer and expectations by assessing the actual performance of the product or service with the expectations of this product or service and can therefore be judged from the perspective of the customer the quality or poor quality of that product or service. According to Cook (2017) if the product or service meets the expectations of the customer, quality assurance has been achieved. Since we have reached this conclusion, then the previous definitions can be combined with a comprehensive definition of quality as (meeting reasonable customer needs and expectations).

1.3 Customer-Focused Service Management

Focusing on the client and knowing how to deal with him is one of the most important pillars and reasons for the success of any business. There are foundations and standards that must exist in each organization about its dealings with its customers and falls under the framework of what needs to be applied when communicating with customers and their service. Using state-of-the-art technology such as personal devices and databases is one of the most important ways to help focus on customers, facilitating communication with customers at any time, and help to create profiles for each customer. Technology, in particular the use of blogs and social networking sites, creates a personality and brand for the organization that reflects its views, trends and what it offers to help develop its relationships with existing, prospective and new customers (Heinonen et al., 2010). Carraher and Parnell (2008) argued that each organization should train its employees in ideal ways to help customers gain trust before contacting them, during their service, and after serving them where the application of this will result in providing a distinct service to firms' customers, which leads to build confidence resulting from the success of the organization and work. The principle of focusing on customer service is one of the most important principles of quality management that all quality experts have focused on, without exception, because customers are one of the basic reasons for the existence of the facility (Bitner & Brown, 2008). The quality systems divided the customers into two parts: the first is the internal customer and is related to the design or delivery of the service, whether working inside or outside the facility, while the other section is the external customer is the beneficiary of the service. One of the most important principles of quality systems is the utmost care for customers, both internal and external, because internal customer satisfaction is an important factor for mastering the work, creativity and sincerity in its delivery, which directly reflects on the external client, which we sometimes call the customer (Schneider & Bowen, 2010). Bitner et al. (2008) stated that organizations must adapt their performance to meet the expected needs of the client, and each of the employees in the facility, regardless of its position in the pyramid, to achieve satisfaction for internal customers, who are colleagues, superiors and subordinates for their constant interaction with each other, and because they constitute the so-called (supplier-chain relationship) because each of them is either a supplier "providing its services to a subsequent source" or importing "any customer" for a particular service or set of services received from a previous source within an enterprise. If satisfaction is achieved for internal customers, there will be satisfaction for external customers (Heinonen et al., 2013). It should be noted that it is difficult to provide an accurate definition of quality as each person has his or her own concept of quality. As for the personal opinion, we see quality as it is (leadership and excellence in doing things.) (Leadership means leading the way in responding to customer requirements and excellence: means workmanship (precision, accuracy and perfection) in the work (Cook, 2017).

1.4 Service Culture

Customer service means the activities, procedures and transactions provided by the corporation and approaches adopted in achieving customer satisfaction in the organization. A customer, or sometimes a client, buyer or purchaser is the individual who receives the product, item of service (end user). When a customer is satisfied by services and items received by an organization they tend to show their satisfaction through actions that might not be meaningful for customer themselves, but are highly meaningful for the organization; they repurchase from an organization again, they recommend the organization for others either my word-of-mouth of by any other way and they develop – with the course of time – loyalty towards the organization and its items (Green et al., 2007).

For that reason, Kong and Jogaratnam (2007) argued that there is a deep need for organizations to deeply digest the gained benefits from following customer satisfaction plans that are based on service and service quality. In order for organizations to develop a coherent understanding of how service quality is important for their organization then there must be an environment which supports service culture. From that point, Pornpitakpan and Han (2013) stated that service culture refers to the extent of the belief of employees and individuals working in the organization the importance of providing quality service to customers and its impact in raising the level of institutional performance and their keenness to provide the best institutional services available. That is why – as according to Kassim and Asiah Abdullah (2010) - excellence in customer service means enterprise excellence and management excellence.

From another perspective, Dikmen and Bozdoglar(2017, 88) defined service culture as *“a culture where an appreciation for good service exists, and where giving good service to internal as well as ultimate, external customers is considered by everyone a natural way of life and one of them most important values”*. Authors noted that the phrase “service culture” has been around within the service knowledge and was coined by Gronroos back in (1990). When looking at the concept, we can see that the word culture is a part of the whole term; this indicates that believing in the power of service must be a part of the organizational belief system in order for it to work and be effective.

Based on that, we can say here that service culture is the system within the organization which supports and backs up working individuals in order to adapt ideologies that are for the benefit of presenting more suitable and coherent service for customers, or to have the inner motive to present the best service for customer launching from staff's own conviction that it is the right thing to do.

2. Hypotheses Development

There are many aspects that defines the organizational culture understanding and digestion of what service culture means, those aspects were mentioned before by Krishnakumary and Thampi (2015); Abu Amuna et al, (2017) and were summed up and shorthanded as what follows:

H₁: People has an influence on customer culture.

Ha and Jang (2010) argued that customer service and service culture cannot be upgraded without the attention and advancement of the internal customer (employee). Those employees are considered to be the frontline for presenting the service; there inner belief in the service forms that overall prospect of future services and customer satisfaction, it is meant that what employees believe in as drivers of good service will be translated as results of their actions which influence customer satisfaction as end users of service/ products (Voss et al., 2007). So, the development of the internal client (employee) of the organization depends largely on the role of management and leadership of the organization ad their efforts in spreading the word regarding service, its quality and its influence. According to the aforementioned argument, it can be noticed that people refer to employees and staff who take the burden of managing, tackling and presenting the service to the end user. Those people are entitled to present the service in the best quality possible within the least time needed; this is initially the wide world definition of a quality service, in order to achieve this, those people have to have full awareness of how important quality can be for the organization, they have to understand that a part of their job is to commit to quality, embrace it and make it a daily routine.

H₂: Process has an influence on customer culture.

Ladhari (2009) argued that the culture of customer service or service culture in general is closely linked to achieving transparency and clarity in the organizational processes. Having an organization with mixed up process that are shaky in its nature won't be of great help as according to Sichtmann et al. (2011). Process inside an organization may include aspects of relationship between employees, and their relationship with their leadership and management. In addition to the relationship of supply chain, commitment to time, presenting the service within the time scope and presenting the service as according to what the customer has asked for based on their expectations. Process may also refer to the internal operations that take place inside the organization and which guarantee the delivery of the service to the client. The degree of organization in these processes, its timely arrangement and how it is being process may play a role in delivering the service to the client with the best shape possible in terms of quality and time. In addition to that, the attention that the management gives to these processes can implant inside the staff an indication how service can be important and caring for its quality can help defining the overall shape of organizational competitiveness (Sichtmann et al., 2011).

H₃: Technology has an influence on customer culture.

According to Lusch et al. (2007) consumers around the world rely on ICTs for their daily social and economic activities that require quality services. Ensuring quality of service in this environment is therefore crucial. The main task of increasing quality of the service is in attracting and maintaining customers and continuing to strengthen the relationship with them, and to reach the overall satisfaction of customers with the services and products provided to them, the customer puts the quality of service at the forefront of the required things, and all services and products required by the organization must be linked to the quality element of where accuracy, speed and efficiency work, the Internet of course provides it (Ueltschy et al., 2007).

Technology in the field of service culture isn't something that can be handled easily; it is based on a focused attention on technological infrastructure so as to reach the widest range of customers in addition to preserving the competitive advantage within the market.

H4: Leadership has an influence on customer culture.

Choosing the right leaders for the organization contributes significantly for the development of customer service while Aydin (2018) saw that attention must be paid to the selection of leader's worthy of the institution's management. This explains what Huey Yiing et al. (2009) came to argue that service culture is mostly a matter of conviction and leaders' beliefs. The idea of leadership and its influence on service culture starts from the influence of leadership on organizational culture. Leaders are connected with employees for longer hours compared with higher management, Groysberg et al. (2018) noted that through this connection leaders can transfer the interest in service culture and service quality to employees which enhance their understanding of service. In Fig. 1; the relationship between variables of study was articulated in order to get a deeper understanding of how customer focused service management can affect service culture in an organization.

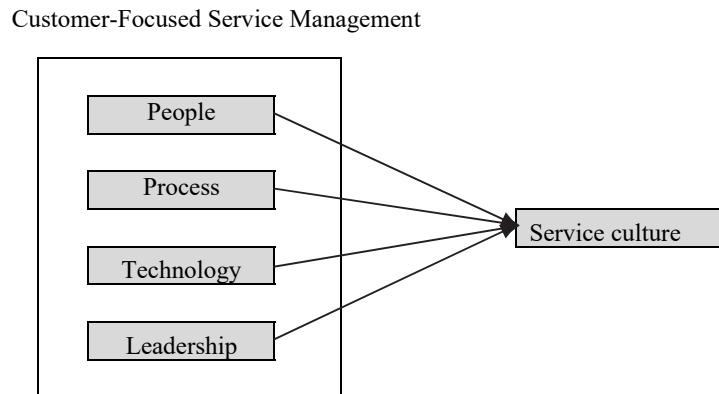


Fig. 1. The proposed study

3. Material and methods

3.1 Research Design

The aim of the current study was to examine the influence of customer-focused service management on service culture within organization. Reaching that aim required researchers to employ quantitative approach based on utilizing 5 Likert scale survey. The survey contained two main sections; the first took into perspective the demographic variables of study sample, while the other section took into perspective variables of customer focused management (people, process, technology and leadership).

3.2 Participants

Survey was distributed on (300) marketing managers and sales supervisors within fast food restaurants chains in Jordan. Sample was retrieved from international fast food chains operating in Jordan through the fiscal year 2018-2019 and included:

Burger King	Subway	Kentucky Chicken	Pizza Hut
Dunkin' Doughnuts	Chili's	Crispy Cream	Domino's Pizza
Hardees'	Texas Chicken	Little Caesar	Popeye's
Macdonald's			

After the application process, total of (278) properly filled questionnaires were retrieved which highlighted a statistically accepted response rate of (92.6%).

3.3 Measures

SPSS was used in order to process the gathered data and we have used descriptive statistics, linear regression to analyze the data.

4. Results

Based on SPSS outcomes, results of study managed to accepted the proposed hypotheses and confirmed a positive influence of customer-focused service management on service culture in the organization, in another meaning, results indicated that following a customer-focused service management strategy within an organization can nourish ad prosper employees', staffs'

and managements' understanding of service and service quality leading to creating a service culture. However, numerical results appeared as followed:

4.1 Demographics

It is found that the majority of sample were males with frequency of (229) forming (82.4%) of the sample, while females appeared as frequency as (49) forming (17.6%) of the sample. Also, it is appeared that (65.8%) of the sample held BA degree followed by diploma holders who scored 19.1% of the sample. Regarding experience as a demographic variable; the sample had an experience of (6-8 years) forming 41.4% of the sample which rhymes with the appearance of service and service quality ideologies and explains their experience in that field, this result was followed by individuals who were within the age range of 2-5 years old forming (37.8%). As well as the majority of sample were within the age range of (26-29 years old) forming (46.8%) of the sample, followed by individuals within the age range of 22-25 who formed (23.4%) of the sample. Also 88.1% of the sample was marketing managers followed by 31 individuals who were sales representatives forming 11.2% of the sample.

4.2 Questionnaire Response Analysis

Table 1
Questionnaire Anaysis

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer-Focused Service Management					
People					
Communications skills in employees are important to attract new customers	278	1	5	3.72	1.099
Training and courses are held biannually/annually to train employees on how to deal with customers	278	1	5	3.62	1.162
Most of employees are aware of what customer relationship management means	278	1	5	3.58	1.047
For employees, customer always right	278	1	5	3.51	1.057
Grand Mean	278	1	5	3.572	0.85
Process					
Internal processes are all based on satisfying customers	278	1	5	3.44	0.977
Service processes were based on delivering the best service in least time possible	278	1	5	3.35	1.049
The more processes there are the less customer satisfaction there is	278	1	5	3.41	1.025
Internal processes are part of serving clients in the best way possible	278	1	5	3.32	1.018
Service culture is a process that is part of the internal process in the facility	278	1	5	3.35	0.956
Grand Mean	278	1	5	3.353	0.81
Technology					
All out services are presented online	278	1	5	3.34	1.003
Our website in interactive and friendly user	278	1	5	3.34	0.995
The website is usable by children without hardship	278	1	5	3.47	1.029
Online service is available inside the facility	278	1	5	3.44	1.041
Technological infrastructure is well-built and always enhanced and developed	278	1	5	3.72	1.099
Grand Mean	278	1	5	3.502	.80928
Leadership					
Leadership has a good level of experience in serving customers	278	1	5	3.55	1.045
Leadership has a high awareness level of customer satisfaction approaches	278	1	5	3.74	1.015
Leadership in the facility transfer experience of service culture to employees	278	1	5	3.69	.971
There is always training courses and seminars for leaders to attend regarding service culture in food industry	278	1	5	3.70	1.002
Performance of leadership is always monitored based on staff performance	278	1	5	3.56	.959
Grand Mean	278	1	5	3.731	.79264
Service Culture					
Implanting service culture is the first step towards reaching organizational excellence	278	1	5	3.96	.912
Service culture can only be reached through focusing on the human factor in the organization	278	1	5	3.56	.995
Service culture can't be available if there weren't enough awareness of service quality among staff	278	1	5	3.81	.934
Employees must learn to appreciate quality service in order for them to have it as a culture inside the organization	278	1	5	3.77	.905
Grand Mean	278	1	5	3.673	.69543

In Table 1, it can clearly be read that individuals had a positive influence regarding statements of questionnaire as all statements recorded higher than mean of scale 3.00 indicating to it as a positive mark. Also it can be seen that variables' means scored higher than mean of scale 3.00 which indicated based on results the positivity of respondents' answers to the statements. A reliability test was carried out using Cronbach's alpha, The result showed a value of (0.929) for the all items as well as alpha for each variable is greater than accepted percent 0.60, which is a reasonable value indicating the tool consistency that enhanced its use for the study.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

The first hypothesis of the survey examines the relationship between customer-focused service management and customer culture. Table 2 shows the summary of the results of our survey. As we can observe from the results, F-value yields a valid number when the level of significance is one percent, which means there was a linear relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. Adjusted-R² indicates that the regression variables estimate approximately 39% of the changes on the dependent variable. Finally, t-value statistics have indicated that the variables of people and leadership positively influence on the dependent variable but the other independent variables; namely process and technology did not represent meaningful effects on the dependent variable. In order to learn more the effects of each independent variable, we next present simple linear regression estimate between each one and dependent variable.

Table 2
The results of regression analysis for examining the first hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.379	.180		7.674	.000
People	.173	.049	.211	3.535	.000
Process	-.029	.059	-.034	-.490	.625
Technology	.051	.057	.059	.890	.374
Leadership	.427	.053	.487	8.026	.000

R = 0.632, R² = 0.40, Adjusted R² = 0.391, F-value = 45.494(0.000)

4.3.1 The effect of People on customer culture

We now examine the effect of people as an independent variable on customer culture. Table 3 shows the results of regression analysis.

Table 3
The results of regression analysis for examining the effect of people on customer culture

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.355	.162		14.523	.000
People	.369	.044	.449	8.351	.000

R = 0.449, R² = 0.202, Adjusted R² = 0.199, F-value = 69.742(0.000)

As we can observe from the results of the regression analysis, F-value yields a statistically sound value when the level of significance is one percent. Adjusted R-Square is equal to 0.199 which means the variable, people, describes approximately 19 percent of the changes on customer culture. Also, t-values are also meaningful and we can conclude that People may positively influence on customer culture.

4.3.2 The effect of Process on customer culture

We then test the impact of process as an independent variable on customer culture. Table 4 presents the results of regression analysis.

Table 4
The results of regression analysis for examining the effect of process on customer culture

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.556	.164		15.538	.000
People	.333	.048	.387	6.983	.000

R = 0.387, R² = 0.15, Adjusted R² = 0.147, F-value = 48.759(0.000)

As we can learn from the results of the regression analysis, F-value provides a statistically meaningful value when the level of significance is one percent. Adjusted R-Square is equal to 0.147 which states the variable, process, presents approximately 15 percent of the changes on customer culture. Also, t-values are also meaningful and we can conclude that Process may positively influence on customer culture.

4.3.3 The effect of Technology on customer culture

Technology is another independent variable, which may be considered as part of the proposed study. Table 5 shows the results of regression analysis.

Table 5
The results of regression analysis for examining the effect of technology on customer culture

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.403	.169		14.259	.000
People	.362	.047	.422	7.727	.000

R = 0.422, R² = 0.178, Adjusted R² = 0.175, F-value = 59.709(0.000)

As we can find out from the results of the regression analysis, F-value reaches a statistically meaningful value when the level of significance is one percent. Adjusted R-Square is equal to 0.175 which means the variable, technology, presents approximately 18 percent of the changes on customer culture. Also, t-values are also meaningful and we can conclude that Technology may positively influence on customer culture.

4.3.4 The effect of Leadership on customer culture

Finally, leadership is the last independent variable, which is considered as part of the proposed study. Table 6 presents the results of regression analysis.

Table 6
The results of regression analysis for examining the effect of leadership on customer culture

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.700	.161		10.577	.000
People	.529	.042	.603	12.546	.000

R = 0.603, R² = 0.363, Adjusted R² = 0.361, F-value = 157.392(0.000)

As we can find out from the results of the regression analysis, F-value reaches a statistically meaningful value when the level of significance is one percent. Adjusted R-Square is equal to 0.361 which means the variable, leadership, presents approximately 36 percent of the changes on customer culture. Also, t-values are also meaningful and we can conclude that Leadership positively influences on customer culture.

5. Discussion

According to scholarly article presented before, and based on results of study which were generated from SPSS it has appeared that all hypotheses were accepted and there is an influence of customer-focused service management on service culture within organizations. Results supported the fact that when an organization steers individuals' interest towards a certain idea – with the help of leadership – it can develop a better understanding of many concept that may serve for the benefit of the organizational performance. Studies also have supported the role of all adopted variables (people, technology, leadership and process) and their roles in increasing the level of awareness regarding service culture and intensify their existence among individuals working within facility.

Among analyzed variables; it appeared that the most influential variable was leadership as it scored the highest among the tested variable referring to itself as the most influential factor in driving the interest of individuals towards more awareness and understanding of service culture. Results matched many previous scholars who argued of leadership role and its influence on organizational culture in general like Aydin (2018) who spoke if the leaders' role in spreading certain ideas among employees, and Yiing et al. (2009) who saw that the close connection between leadership and employees may help in spreading the culture of quality service, in addition to Groyberg et al. (2018) who noted to the intensified action that leadership can have on employees in changing the way they look at things. Followed by leadership in influence there appeared that among the variables which had an influence on service culture within an organization was people, referring to the working individuals inside an organization. This indicates that in order to spread a certain belief in an organization's workers should have that belief first, there is no way that an organization may be built on an idea that is not believed by its workers. The organizational culture is the key here and the way individuals think and understand the mission and vision of their organization plays a role

as well. Quality of service in fast food restaurants is among the most important factors that frames the overall acceptance of the restaurant brand and defines its market share. When talking about service quality, it might be exposed to many factors that need to be controlled given that is it – to a certain extent – subjected to personal preferences, what is a good service for someone might not be a good service for someone else. Inserting service culture within a restaurant is not something easy, it is built on massive amount of efforts, strategies and plans that supports its existence and modifies its approaches. Service culture is something that is built-in within organization, it starts from inside and moves out to the external environment as a reflection of the belief system that an organization adopts. Looking at the concept from in a naked-eye one sees that individuals within an organization has to be smart enough to understand what are the expectations of customers and deliver the service in the same level to them. When they understand the nature of their customers, they would be more able to identify what a fast service means to them, what a good meal means to them and what are preferences for them. This can be a source to build a decent service culture that is oriented for the benefit of the organization through focusing on customers, this way it could be an approach that fosters loyalty and satisfaction among employees leading to better performance and reaching excellence.

Based on results of study the following is recommended:

- Service culture should not be spread among frontline employees only, it should surpass to the leaders, middle management, higher management and CEO.
- Understanding customer expectations has to rhyme with organizational mission and vision; employees must have full understanding of their organization's mission and vision before starting to understand service culture.
- Service culture transcends the idea of serving others, it is more of an abstract concept that starts from inside. Employees must believe in service culture before acting on it.
- Organizations should not look at the idea of creating service culture as a cost, it is more of an investment for the future of the organization.

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