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Faculty of Business, Management and Economics

Staff impact on Customer Satisfaction
Bachelor Degree

Besiana Behluli

November/ 2010
Prishtinë



Faculty of Business, Management and Economics

Bachelor Thesis
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Staff Impact on Customer Satisfaction

Supervisor: Urgan Alija

November/2010

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Bachelor Degree

Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out what impact has a company's staff/employees in the customers' level of overall satisfaction towards the company. Another purpose was to see how employees interrelate with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

The method applied in this thesis was a questionnaire containing 25 questions. All the questions were formulated to examine directly how these respondents feel regarding employees who out to be a company's most valuable asset.

The results indicated that all these respondents valued mostly the employees in a company, and that employees would in most of the cases determine their purchase decisions and loyalty towards that company, and unfortunately they are not at all satisfied with the quality of customer service and the importance the companies here in Kosovo give to their customers.

The principal conclusion was that customers value tremendously the relationship with employees, their interpersonal skills, and their knowledge about the product or service. For the customer the main importance is the employees' behavior in matter of courtesy, understanding, willingness to help, and to be in complete service for them. Customers see mainly the employee with whom they have direct contact and who is a representative assigned by the company, since he is authorized to have this responsibility, in the eyes of the customer that employee is the company itself.

This research came to valuable conclusions where the impact of a company's staff in the customers' overall level of satisfaction towards a company is considerably high. This can be of big help for many companies who are mainly interested in their customers' satisfaction and its improvement.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the man whose encouragement, and continually support made the hard-work easier, to him who with good intentions and harsh remarks always keeps me going and pushes my ambitions into my achievements.

I dedicate it especially to my beloved father Hajrush Behluli and my whole family.

Acknowledgement

It is a pleasure for me to show my gratitude to all the people who supported me in any respect during the completion of this thesis. I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Uragan Alija, who helped me in finding many necessary materials and guided me through the whole process. I am heartily thankful to my family for their unconditionally love and support.

Lastly, I offer my blessings to my friends, colleagues and to all the other respondents who took the time and did not hesitate in helping me regarding the questionnaire.

Thank you!

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will cover an introduction regarding my research done in the branch of customer satisfaction. First I will provide some background information regarding customer satisfaction, its importance, and the impact that a staff's company has on it, in Kosovo. A problem discussion will continue which will lead to research question and overall research purpose

1.1 Background information

In a competitive marketplace where businesses compete for customers, customer satisfaction is seen as a key differentiator and increasingly has become a key element of business strategy (Gitman L.J., McDaniel C.D. 2005). Every company's main priority is and should be satisfied customers. A customer is what every company targets in order to gain increased profit and survive in this global competitive economy.

Customer satisfaction is an abstract concept and the actual manifestation of the state of satisfaction will vary from person to person and product/service to product/service. The level of satisfaction can vary depending on other factors the customer, such as other products against which the customer can compare the organization's products. (Joby J. 2003)

Any organization's employees who have any form of customer contact need to be carefully trained in customer satisfaction techniques. This may be attendance at some form of formal training program or careful instruction from experienced department managers who are well versed in these techniques. Losing 68% of potential repeat business is clearly unacceptable for any growth-oriented business organization. (Adams, C.W. 2007)

1.2 Background Information about customer satisfaction and its indicators in Kosovo

In Kosovo there are many barriers for companies because of the economy which is not so developed and the lower number of population. Kosovo declared independence in February 17, 2008 this influenced also in the political actualization which is intense in the beginning of its creation as a new country. Because of the product/company competition is not so high many businesses are more profit-concentrated and not so much research has been done in customer satisfaction field or in the impact that personnel has on customer satisfaction.

In our daily life we have the opportunity to be the customer of any different company which offers different products/services. During the contacts with these companies we can see how much effort they pay on empowering their staff and if they carry their mission and vision to their employees. According to Jack Welsh (1993) "The three most important things you need to measure in business are customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and cash flow." This is one of the most adequate opinions which emphasize the link between these three important assets

which contribute in a company's success. We can see clearly that the customer satisfaction is not taken seriously as a concept and as an asset which determines customer loyalty, customer retention and profitability.

1.3 Problem Discussion

Customer satisfaction is essential for any company's success and a key differentiator as seen above from various opinions. And also the employees should carry the mission and vision of a company, thus contributing in customer satisfaction and resulting in cash flow.

American Customer Satisfaction Index is usually used as a way in measuring customer satisfaction which has 5 multi-item scales. Each multi-item scale represents a different aspect of customer attitudes: Customer Expectations, Perceived Overall Quality, Perceived Value, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty, Customer Complaints (Henning J. 2004)

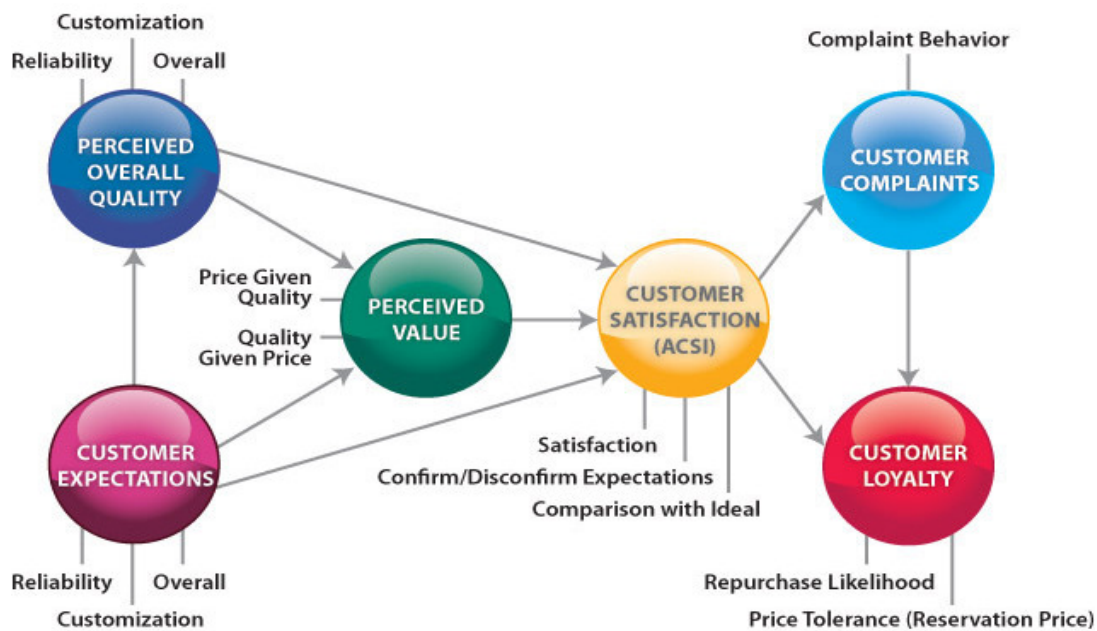


Figure 1. American customer satisfaction index
Source: ACSI

As we can see from the figure above these 5 multi-items and interdependently linked with each other, each of them having a significant meaning and impact in the overall customer satisfaction. Customer expectations is connected directly with perceived overall quality and perceived value, which contribute to customer satisfaction which results in customer complaints or customer loyalty.

According to a Harvard University study "The Service Profit Chain" is a theory which demonstrates how leading companies' link profit and growth to loyalty, satisfaction and value.

Profit and growth – Most companies strive towards profit and growth. **Customer loyalty** – Companies with profit and growth are characterized by a large number of loyal customers. **Customer satisfaction** – Loyal customers result from satisfied customers. **Value** – Satisfaction depends on the company's ability to create value for the customer. **Employee loyalty** – Value is created by loyal employees. **Employee productivity** – Satisfied and loyal employees are far more productive. **Employee satisfaction** – Employee loyalty is driven by employee satisfaction. **Internal quality** – engage employees and ensure employee satisfaction the company has to build up the best possible internal quality (Heskett J.L Sasser E. L, and Schlesinger L. A., 1997).

Through many studies that have been done, there is seen a clear link between customer satisfaction and employees of a company. Also in the example above we can see the assets which are linked with each other. However, there is not shown the direct link with the customer satisfaction and the employees of the company, especially the front-line staff who are in direct contact with customers. There is also not shown the other parts of the staff and how is their job performance linked with the customers' level of satisfaction.

1.4 Overall purpose and research questions

The main purpose of this research paper is to find out the link between customer satisfaction and the staff of the company. How does an employee's attitude or behavior, job performance and employee satisfaction influence in the customers' overall satisfaction towards the company.

The literature of this thesis covers detailed definitions of customer satisfaction, customer service, employee satisfaction, the correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, what steps should a company take in order to fully prepare its employees when direct contacting with the customer.

There are also many other steps shown which can be taken by a company in order to increase customer satisfaction. To achieve these objectives and to find out the link between customer satisfaction and staff's job performance I also did a survey with 30 respondents where they were asked to answer the questions like customers.

RQ1. How does an employee's attitude or behavior influence in the customers' overall satisfaction towards the company?

RQ2. Does employee satisfaction have a direct impact on customer satisfaction?

RQ3. Does the job performance of front line staff have a significant role in a customers' level of satisfaction?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review chapter summarizes all the books, studies done by various researches, and articles regarding customer satisfaction and its relationship with employee satisfaction and job performance. There are many definitions and concepts shown like customer satisfaction, customer service, employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, the importance of employees in customer satisfaction, how to recruit employees, and many steps which can be used by companies in order to increase their level of customer satisfaction. These definitions are essential in order to gain a clear understanding of the overall thesis.

2.1. What is a customer?

"There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else."

Sam Walton

Every one of us is and can be a customer possibly everyday of our lives. We consume, purchase use products/services from various business which we compensate with money or another service. A customer is often defined an end user. This is someone or some company who writes a check to acquire your products or services. (Bobinski, D. 2004)

In order for a company to understand its customers, first it needs to find out about their needs and wants. It is important to treat each customer with the highest respect and after finding out about their needs it should focus on how to meet its customers' needs and requirements.

The value of a product is the mental estimation a consumer makes of it. Formally it may be conceptualized as the relationship between the consumer's perceived benefits in relation to the perceived costs of receiving these benefits. It is often expressed as the equation (Fernández S. R. & Bonillo I. A. 2007):

$$\text{Value} = \text{Benefits} / \text{Cost}$$

Perceived Quality is based on ideal expectations, it measures the perception of what actually happened in a service or product encounter compared with what should happen in the situation from the perspective of the customer. (Zemke, R & Woods, J 1999)

2.2. Customer Satisfaction

"Satisfying a customer is a race without finish" – Vernon Zelmer

Customer satisfaction is an indicator if the company has met the customer's requirements. It is of high importance especially now days, where there is high competition of firms, who want to distinguish themselves, and often use customer satisfaction as a value proposition.

According to Adams, C.W. (2007), Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart, the biggest chain of its kind in the world is credited with establishing an excellent set of guidelines for customer satisfaction:

1. A customer is the most vital person in any business organization
2. A customer isn't dependent upon us, we're dependent upon him
3. A customer doesn't interrupt our work; he is the reason for it
4. A customer does us a favor by coming in. We aren't doing him a favor by waiting on him.
5. A customer is an essential part of our business, not an outsider
6. A customer is not just money in our cash register. He is a person with feelings that deserve to be treated with respect.
7. A customer is a person who comes to us with his needs and wants. Our job is to fill them.
8. A customer deserves the most courteous attention we can provide. He is the lifeblood of this and every other business. He pays your salary. Without him, we would have to close our doors



Figure 2. Customer Satisfaction from company perspective
Source: ELMER Group 2010

2.3. Measuring Customer Satisfaction

In order to have a concise picture of the level of customer satisfaction the organization needs an efficient tool to measure it. The usual measures of customer satisfaction involve a survey. (Kessler SH. 2003)

According to Zemke, R & Woods, J (1999) these are five major tools which are commonly used in measuring customer satisfaction:

Focus Groups – Roundtable discussions with small customer groups

Surveys – questionnaire studies of large numbers of customers

Critical Incidents reports – experiences told in customers' own words

Advisory Panels – representative groups of customers offering advice

One-on-One Conversations – Personal contacts with individual customers

According to US News and World Report:

- Only 4% actually register a complaint.
- The 96% 'silent majority' doesn't get mad, they get even, go elsewhere and they tell others.
- The average dissatisfied customer tells an average of 9.5 people
- Dissatisfied complainers are very likely to give repeat business: 50-75% give repeat business if handled adequately, 95% if handled quickly.
- Dissatisfied complainers who receive quick resolution of a problem tell an average of 5 people.

2.4 Improving Customer Satisfaction

Improving customer satisfaction is more than just an ideal to strive for. It's a critical, measurable commodity that can have a disastrous impact on a company's bottom line if it's missing. (Vicari R. 2007)

A company should always put its customers concerns first and make sure they are taken care of immediately. The negative comments as feedback should be used for a positive purpose, changes and improvements. It is with no benefits to have a low level service and untrained staff. That is the reason why special training and high involvement of managers with employees is necessary to have high-quality service.

Because it's critical that you form a close working relationship with your client, customer service is of vital importance. What follows are a selection of tips that will make your clients feel valued, wanted and loved. (Thompson A. 2002)

1. **Encourage face-to-face dealings-** It is much easier for a client to work with a person they have met personally, then with someone they've just exchanged some emails or talked over the phone. Even though it is scary and with risk for an employee to meet the customer face-to-face it has also its advantages. It will create such circumstances that the

customer will feel more comfortable in doing business expressing his/her requirements.

2. **Respond to messages promptly and keep customers informed** –For a customer it is important that the company fixes quickly its problems, or answers fast their requests. Even if it is a serious problem that needs time to be fixed it is necessary to inform the customer that the company is working on it.
3. **Be friendly and approachable** – It is important for an employee especially one who has direct contact with customers to always keep a clear head, be polite, act with courtesy and friendly. Many customers can be over demanding, and show no understanding for the situation, still the employee should remain calm and handle every situation carefully, remembering to be reasonable, and respond to clients wishes as best as possible.
4. **Have a clearly-defined customer service policy** – Many customer requests or problems can be complicated, and a well defined customer service can save both the customer & employee a lot of time. It is very helpful for each stage of a customer’s enquiry to be followed until the end. It prevents passing the customer from person-to-person and saves the company’s image of professionalism.
5. **Attention to detail – little niceties-** The niceties are some details which can be a little time consuming but give the customer the feeling that they are taken care of, and make them feel wanted. They should be done always by the company like; send emails to its customers for holidays, their birthdays or any other significant day, this small and very nice gesture is always welcomed by the customer and makes them feel more valued.
6. **Anticipate clients needs and go out your own way to get them** - Paying attention to customers and find out what they need and how can you help them, always pays out. If a customer, has problems with anything, or is working on a project that you could help him/her, an employee should always be helpful because after the help or any favor the employee is always likely to make nice remarks about that and thus give recommendations to others.
7. **Honor your promises** – It is essential for every company to deliver whatever it promises to its customers. Customers hate to be disappointed and often there are many factors which contribute to not deliver something on time. It is important to apologize and work on fixing the problem.

2.5. Customer Service

“Customer service is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation.” (Scott J. L. 2002). "Customers have memories. They will remember you, whether you remember them or not. Customer trust can be destroyed at once by a major service problem, or it can be undermined one day at a time, with a thousand small demonstrations of incompetence. (Peppers, D. and Rogers, M. 2008).

From the point of view of an overall sales process engineering effort, customer service plays an important role in an organization's ability to generate income and revenue. (Selden, P.H.1998). In order for a company to maintain a satisfied and trusted relationship with its customers it is important to demonstrate in their day-to-day activities that customer service is a part of the customer value proposition.

2.5.1 How to create world class service

Customers are the lifeblood of any organization. Serving them well requires a customer-focused culture and customer-friendly system (Zemke, R & Woods, J (1999). There are various tools available to resourceful service leaders eager to tune in to customers. According to Zemke, R & Woods, J (1999) these are five of them:

Focus Groups – Roundtable discussions with small customer groups

Surveys – questionnaire studies of large numbers of customers

Critical Incidents reports – experiences told in customers' own words

Advisory Panels – representative groups of customers offering advice

One-on-One Conversations – Personal contacts with individual customers



Figure 3. World Class Customer-Driven Quality
Source: US News Word report

2.6. Customer Loyalty

Customer Loyalty is more a result of how customers feel about the overall experience they receive from you than what they rationally think about your individual products and services. Carbone, L (2004)

Providing high quality service not only has benefits for customers but also for the company itself. Through high quality service a company gets satisfied customers, thus leading to customer loyalty and strong relationship with the company. Loyal customers are highly important to a company; they somehow ensure a company for some sales reduced costs for attracting new customers.

When a company consistently delivers superior value and wins customer loyalty, market share and revenues go up and the cost of acquiring new customers goes down. The company then can pay workers better. Increased pay boosts employee morale and commitment; as employees stay longer, their productivity goes up and training costs fall; employees' overall job satisfaction, combined with their experience, helps them serve customers better; and customers are then more inclined to stay loyal to the company. Reichheld F. F. (2000)

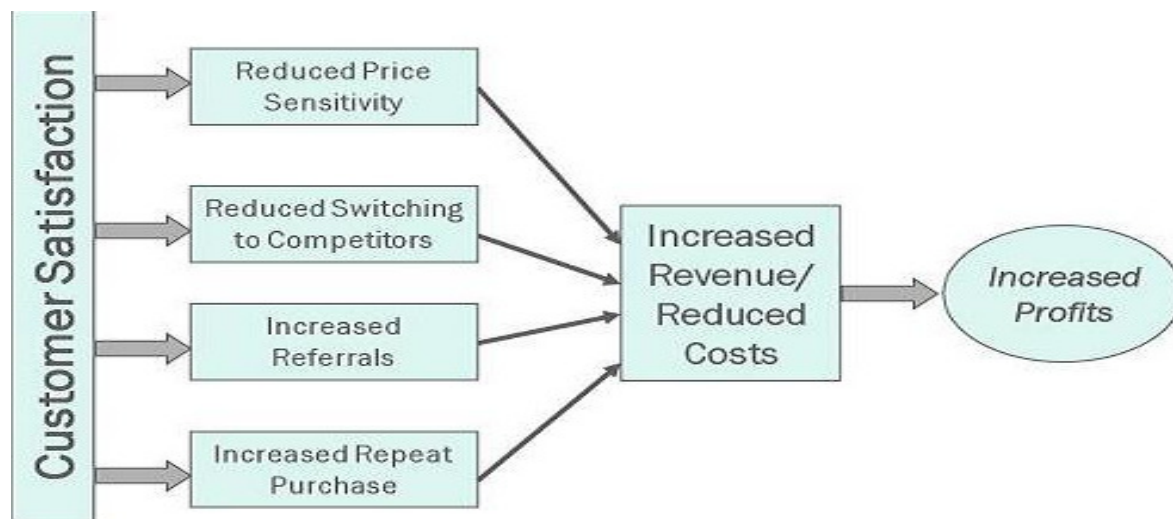


Figure 4. Benefits of customer satisfaction & loyalty
Source: SureVista Solutions 2007

2.7. Customer Care

According to The Chartered Institution of Marketing customer care involves putting systems in place to maximize customer satisfaction towards the business, it is more directly important for receptionists, sales staff, and other employees in customer-facing roles, customer care should be a core element of their job description and training, and a core criterion in recruitment.

A survey was conducted online within the United States in June 30-July 2, 2010 among 2,217 adults (aged 18 and over) by Harris Interactive on behalf of Right Now Technologies via its Quick Query omnibus product, below you can see the results (Bozeman, M. 2010):

The 2010 report outlines why consumers stop doing business with a company:

- Rude staff (73 percent)
- Issues weren't resolved quickly (55 percent)
- Unknowledgeable staff (51 percent)

2.8 Employees as part of the staff

Since service employees are crucially important for a company's overall performance, services employees need to learn: The organizational culture, purpose and strategy, Interpersonal and technical skills, and Product/ Service Knowledge. (Lovelock, Ch. & Wirtz, J. 2006)

1. The organizational culture, purpose and strategy

Teach the new recruits the core values of the company such as job commitment, excellence and great service, mutual respect, courtesy and integrity.

2. Interpersonal and technical skills

Interpersonal skills include attentive listening, making eye contact and body language. Technical skills on the other hand have to do with service knowledge of various machines and service process. These two types of skills must be combined in order to reach optimal job performance.

3. Product/ Service Knowledge

It is important that the staff has to be knowledgeable about the product or service. They must possess knowledge about products features in order to explain it to the customer efficiently. Training new staff members helps in increasing their level of self esteem, by making them feel like professionals, through possessing enough knowledge about their job and doing it the best way.

2.8.1. Empowered and Qualified Staff

According to Zemke, R & Woods, J (1999), there are six behavioral skills that will communicate to customer that the company is an organization that values their business.

1. **Greet the customer** – First impression matters! This is very true because when a prospective customer first walks in or telephones it is of high importance to make them feel comfortable, and welcome, but this should also continually happen with your existing customers.
2. **Value your customers** – Customers want to feel special. A customer-focused organization's main goal is to enable people to enjoy the benefits of its product/service.

3. **Ask how to help customers** – Try to understand customer’s need each time you deal with them, especially their needs at that particular moment.
4. **Listen to your customers** – Listen totally to your customers’ words, their tone, and their body language.
5. **Help your customers** – Customers mainly buy a product or service for the benefits that it offers, that’s why it is important for a company to be customer-focused instead of product or service–focused.
6. **Invite your customers back** – Remember to always thank your customers for coming in or contacting you. Since this is all about last impression, it is very important because that’s how your customer will feel until they have a chance to interact with you again.

2.8.2 Parts of the staff in front line positions

Contact Person – Below are listed some of the critical factors in this category are psychological characteristics that the contact person should to some extent innately posses. (Zemke, R & Woods, J. 1999)

- **Courtesy** – It is expected from the contact person to be polite and patient
- **Flexibility** – To be flexible in reaching the same destination without additional costs or risks.
- **Knowledge** – Posses sufficient knowledge to precisely address the needs of the customer
- **Empowerment** – Should have a level of authority in proportion with the level of responsibility
- **Training** –Should be trained how to handle customers needs. These trainings include: communication, problem-solving, and stress management.

Call Centers

According to Lovelock, Ch. & Wirtz, J. (2006), call centers have become essential to the marketing and customer care strategies of many businesses. More than \$300 billion is spent annually in call center. Companies can reap big benefits: increasing revenue from call centers by 20 to 35%, cutting costs by 15 to 25 %, and improving the quality of service. Many companies are shifting from high-contact to low contact service, thus decreasing the number of employees who have face to face contacts with their customers and increasing the number of employees working by telephone or email, never meeting their customers. These jobs usually are part time jobs where the employees are expected to deal with up to 2 calls per minutes. Even though these jobs are stressful it is estimated that these part-time employees are more satisfied and perform just as well.

2.8.2.1 Front line work is difficult and stressful

Front-line Service employees are also known as boundary spanners while working at the boundary of a company they link the insight of the company (by being efficient in executing operational tasks) and the outside of the company (by satisfying customers. Often front-line staff is asked to perform many roles and through this it leads to conflict with customers or between staff employees. (Lovelock, Ch. & Wirtz, J. 2006)

Sources of Conflict

Role stress in front-line positions has three main causes: person/role, organizational/client, and interclient conflicts. (Lovelock, Ch. & Wirtz, J. 2006)

- **Person/role conflict**

Conflicts may be caused when the requirements of the job and the personality of the employee don't fit together. Often over demanding customers can cause conflicts. The employee should always be independent, warm and friendly, and because these characteristics are found in people with high self esteem and the front line jobs are low level jobs, the employees need special training and to be professionalized.

- **Organization/client Conflict**

Many organizations differ between each other in different ways, some because of the goals and main focuses that they set for their companies. In the organizations which are not customer oriented front line staff face these conflicts more likely, because the demands of the company and the client differ.

- **Interclient Conflict**

Conflicts not always have to involve the employee; they can be caused for different reasons and from different people. Conflicts can often happen between clients themselves which create an unpleasant situation for the staff member as it is difficult to satisfy both sides of customers.

2.8.3 Top 10 common mistakes employees make with customers- and what you can do to prevent them

Below are 10 common mistakes employees make with customers, which are extremely important to prevent in order to maintain a healthy relationship with existing customers and attract new ones. (Zemke, R & Woods, J 1999)

1. Taking the customer for granted.
2. Using jargon, expecting the customer to understand your lingo
3. Speaking so fast that the customer has to ask the employee to repeat.

4. Giving short, clipped answers.
5. Not being proactive when a problem arises.
6. Not appearing like they care about the customer's complaint.
7. Being preoccupied with other tasks (talking with co-workers, doing paper-work, stocking shelves)
8. Interrupting the customer or no longer listening, believing they know what the customer is asking or saying.
9. Making judgments about the buying power of a customer based upon his or her appearance, language skills, or company's reputation.
10. Arguing with the customer.

2.8.4 Employee Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been defined as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job (Brief, A. P., & Weiss, H. M. 2001). Employee satisfaction is seen as how happy employees are with their job, their work environment, their relationship with their supervisors, and other staff members.

According to Locke, A. E. (1976) The Affect Theory states that satisfaction is determined by a discrepancy between what one wants in a job and what one has in a jobs, how much one values a given facet of work (e.g. the degree of autonomy in a position) moderates how satisfied/dissatisfied one becomes when expectations are/aren't met. When a person values a particular facet of a job, his satisfaction is more greatly impacted both positively (when expectations are met) and negatively (when expectations are not met), compared to one who doesn't value that facet.

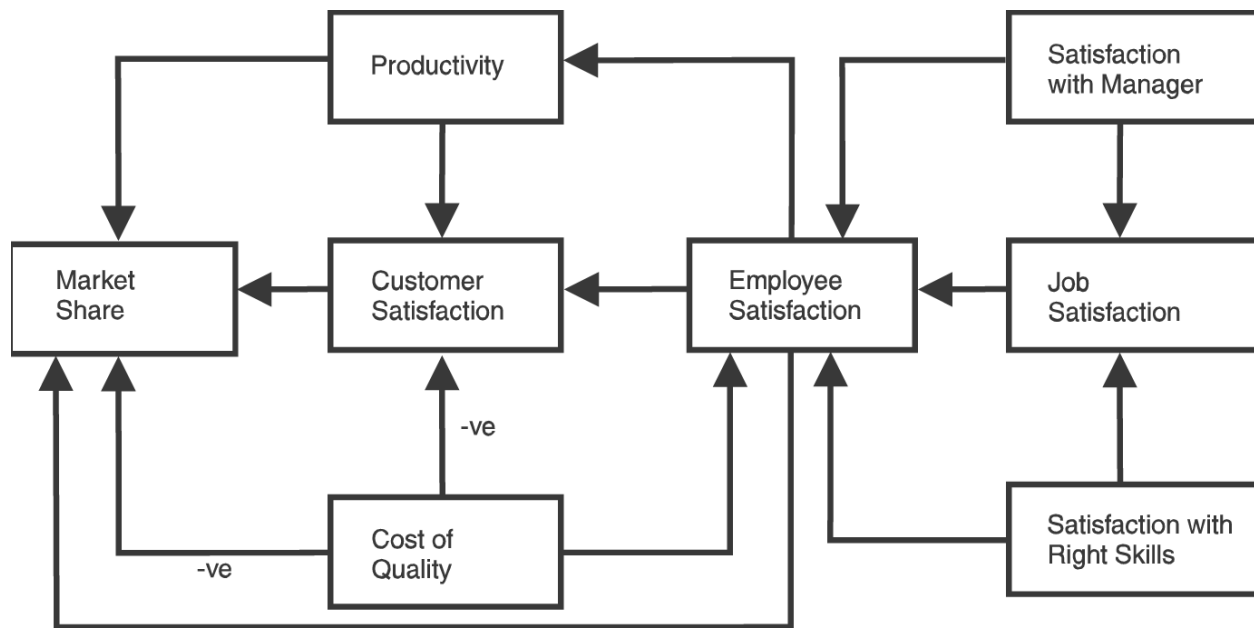


Figure 5. Employee Satisfaction
Source: Jauhari V. 2001

A satisfied employee means a highly motivated person, energetic with willingness in helping customers and colleagues; he is ready to generate new ideas and suggestions and uses the experience with customers in improving its performance. Satisfied employees should be an organizations' main priority, since, researches have found that employees who are satisfied with their job are key to productivity and have a major impact on customer satisfaction.

2.8.4.1 Why is employee satisfaction important?

According to Sure Vista Solution and their survey employee satisfaction is important because:

- Committed and engaged employees create satisfied customers
- The cost of turnover – Hiring costs, training costs, and productivity loss is typically between 20-25% of average employee salary.
- Company knowledge and customer history – The knowledge of how your company operates and information about your customers leaves when an employee leaves your company.
- Excessive turnover and/or loss of good people – When there is high turnover and/or good people leave the effect can be felt throughout the company, leaving an unspoken negative feeling among other staff.
- Customer service suffers – When people leave and customer service suffers, the guest experience is negatively impacted.

2.8.5 The correlation between Employee Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction

There is a strong positive relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. (Schmitt & Allscheid 1995) Employees by being an important part and element of a company, they can have a strong impact on its success. The way employees feel about their job is in direct correlation with how they perform their daily tasks. Employees must be satisfied with their job, they must feel valued by the company, and they must be able to give ideas and express freely their opinions and have the chance to take initiatives.

Giving them space will help them improve their attitudes and thus their overall satisfaction which will lead in their better performance, which has a direct link in customer satisfaction. Satisfied employees are more willing to help customers, they make them feel understood, and they will have the right training in order to be able to help their customers regarding any product or service.

Perceived employee satisfaction, perceived employee loyalty, and perceived employee commitment has a sizable impact on perceived product quality and on perceived service quality. (Vilares J. M. and Cohelo S. P., 2000)

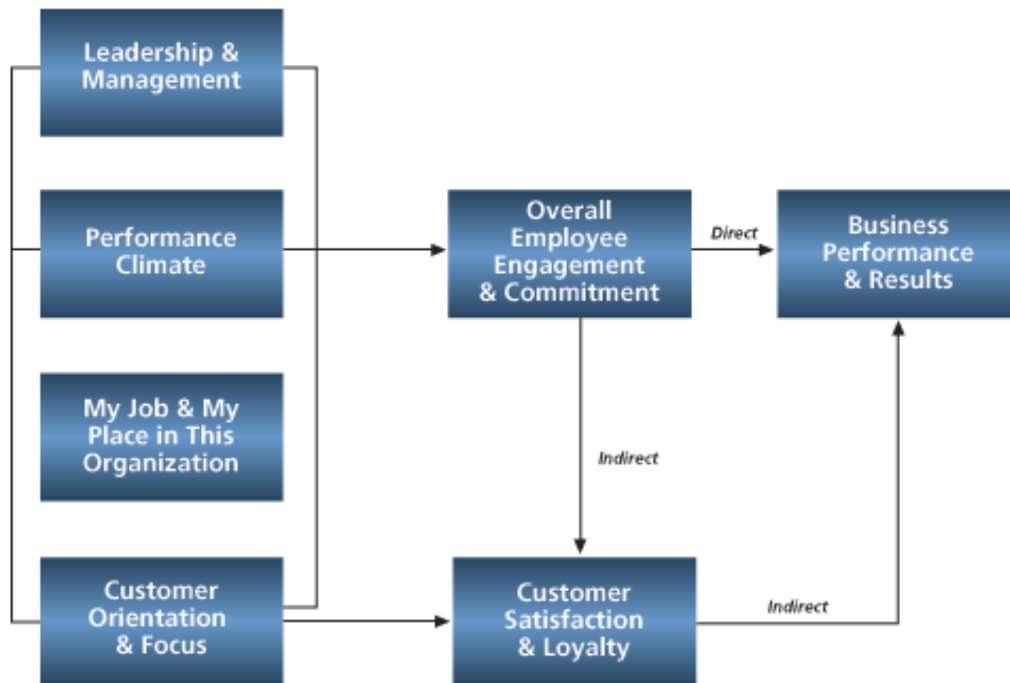


Figure 6. Employee satisfaction & Customer satisfaction
Source: Maritz - The Science and Art of People and Potential 2007

Based on an analysis of 7,939 business units in 36 companies, there were found relationships, large enough to have substantial practical value, between unit-level employee

satisfaction-engagement and business-unit outcomes such as customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee turnover, and accidents. (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002)

By managing the boundary between the customer and the firm, employees in service providing jobs influence competitive advantage by shaping customer loyalty and buying behavior (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997)

Rucci *et al.* (1998) analyzed the employee-customer profit chain at the company Sears Roebuck and Co. In their model, employee behavior is explained by three variables: attitude about the job, attitude about the company and employee retention. They have estimated that a five-point improvement in employee attitudes drives a 1.3 point rise in customer satisfaction, which in turn will drive a 0.5 per cent improvement in revenue growth. (Vilares J. M. and Cohelo S. P., 2000)

2.8.6 Improving Employee Satisfaction

Today's employment market is so competitive that talented employees can switch jobs with little or no time off or lost income. Most even improve their financial situation. There is currently a wealth of information available outlining the results of research on positive employee motivation and retention strategies. Below are nine steps to improving employee satisfaction. (Goughnour, R. 2001)

1. Shared Mission or Vision:

This mission or vision statement should be followed and be set as a goal to employees in order for them to serve as a guide and to know clearly their tasks, in order to be more competitive and productive for the company.

2. Regular Employee Input and Feedback Programs:

Every employee of each level of a company must have the space and opportunity to express their opinions, experiences, and concerns regarding the company and the customers. Through this employees will feel as a part of the company, whose thoughts are taken in consideration of. It is also effective and in advantage of the company, to allow employees contribute to the company with their abilities, and experiences since they are mostly in direct contact with customers.

3. Clearly Defined and Communicated job Expectations:

Since, every employees job as an impact in the organizations overall performance, it is necessary that the job expectations of an employee must be clearly communicated, in order to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. So, these expectations must be communicated to the employee in order for him to provide to the company a high quality job performance.

4. Regular and Fair Performance Feedback:

In order for the employee to know if he is working effectively, and his work quality, the employer must find adequate ways in communicating feedback. Discussing openly about an employee's performance is of benefit to the company as a whole, also for the employee itself in

order to work in the improvement of his performance, or at least to have a clear picture of his performance.

5. Compensation, Benefits and Rewards Programs that are aligned With Mission Accomplishment:

Every good performance must be rewarded! People in general want to be compensated for the effort and time that they spend on something. Employees that work in proportion with the mission of the company, and thus do a good job, they must be rewarded in order to be motivated and satisfied. Also, these rewards and benefits will as motivation for the other employees who learn from their example.

6. Promotion of a Diversified Work Force:

A Diversified Work Force carries within a concept where people from different countries, culture, race, etc., are welcomed to work and share new ideas and perceptions. A diversified work force promotes the changes that may occur in such work environment, done by people with differences, who may create interesting new activities.

7. Hiring the Right Employees:

Hiring the right people is one of the most difficult tasks of a company. Hiring the right employees, with the right knowledge and skills, is of high importance to the company, in order to avoid changing its employees, which may result in waste of time and high costs as to training them all the necessary knowledge and skills they need to perform their job well, and also teaching them the company's mission and vision which it follows, and all the new rules which are necessary.

8. Comprehensive Employee Orientation and Integration Programs:

After the company has followed all the steps above; create a clear vision, communicate its job expectation, the feedback and rewards to the employees, and hired the right employees, it must work on the employees knowledge and abilities which they will need in their jobs. Companies must find ways and develop qualified programs in helping employees how to work together and do a productive and effective performance.

9. Strong Commitment to Training and Development Programs:

Since, the market is becoming more crowded with the increased competition, and the constantly changing and developing technology, employers have to invest in their employees skills and knowledge expand, so that they can implement them directly for the benefit of the company.

2.8.7. Ways to motivate Staff members

According to Zemke, R & Woods, J (1999), there are 3 specific ways how to motivate staff member in order to achieve efficient job performance.

1. **Recognition** – a powerful way to motivate a staff member by public praise in front of one’s colleagues.
2. **Winning an Award** – for exceptional performance which shows an employees accomplishments and holds them up as an example, these awards sometimes involve monetary benefits or lasting privileges.
3. **Celebration** – the organization organizes picnics, parties, etc., in order to celebrate joint effort and motivating everyone to keep up the good work.

2.9. How to create valuable Experience for customers

“Experiences do not have a beginning or an end: They are a continuum”

Lewis P. Carbone

Experience has always been both a bridge and a by-product when customers connect with organizations. Carbone, L (2004)

Carbone, L. states that experiences are formed through the combination of three different but interrelated types:

Functional Clues – Clues emitted by the functionality of the specific good or service.

Humanic - Clues involve stimuli produced by people: the way the customer perceives things such as choice of word, tone of voice, voice level, gestures, body language and so forth.

Mechanic – Clues come from the physical “things” that are intimately woven into the experience: the sights, sounds, smells, textures, and physical elements that contribute to the overall experience.

Type of Clue	Emitted by	Interpretation
Functional	Product or Service	Rational/Conscious
Mechanic	Environmental	Emotional/Unconscious
Humanic	People	Emotional/Unconscious

Figure 7. Classifying Clues
Source: Carbone L.P. (2004)

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The literature review gives all the necessary definitions such as: customer satisfaction, customer service, customer loyalty, customer care, employee satisfaction, and experiences. It also shows ways and steps how to improve customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. There are demonstrated ways to motivate staff. How employee satisfaction affects customer satisfaction, the importance of employee satisfaction, and the mistakes that employees can make and how can these mistakes be prevented.

Regarding the first question: How does an employee's attitude or behavior influence in the customers' overall satisfaction towards the company? The literature gives clear view and statistics such as the survey done by Harris Interactive on behalf of Right Now Technologies via its Quick Query omnibus product, about the question why consumers stop doing business with a company resulting with 73 % because of rude staff, and 51 % because of unknowledgeable staff. (Bozeman, M. 2010)

Further in the literature it is shown that it is extremely important for an employee especially one who has direct contact with customers to always keep a clear head, be polite, act with courtesy and friendly. (Thompson A. 2002)

Rucci *et al.* (1998) analyzed the employee-customer profit chain at the company Sears Roebuck and Co. In their model, employee behavior is explained by three variables: attitude about the job, attitude about the company and employee retention. They have estimated that a five-point improvement in employee attitudes drives a 1.3 point rise in customer satisfaction, which in turn will drive a 0.5 per cent improvement in revenue growth. (Vilares J. M. and Cohelo S. P., 2000)

According to Zemke, R & Woods, J (1999), there are six behavioral skills that will be necessary to communicate to customer that the company is an organization that values their business. These behavioral skills include: greet the customer, value your customers, and ask how to help customers, listen to your customers, help your customers, and invite your customers back.

Employees' attitude and behavior has a big influence in determining the customers' loyalty. They must possess interpersonal skills which include attentive listening, making eye contact and body language. (Lovelock, Ch. & Wirtz, J. 2006)

The second question links directly employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is seen as how happy employees are with their job, their work environment, their relationship with their supervisors, and other staff members. (Brief, A. P., & Weiss, H. M. 2001) According to Sure Vista Solution and their survey employee satisfaction is important because committed and engaged employees create satisfied customers.

Any organization's employees who have any form of customer contact need to be carefully trained in customer satisfaction techniques. (Adams, C.W. 2007) There is a strong positive relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. (Schmitt & Allscheid 1995)

Based on an analysis of 7,939 business units in 36 companies, there were found relationships, large enough to have substantial practical value, between unit-level employee satisfaction-engagement and business-unit outcomes such as customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee turnover, and accidents. (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002)

The literature review shows the parts of the staff in front line positions, the psychological characteristics that the contact person should to some extent innately possess, which are courtesy, flexibility, knowledge, empowerment and training. (Zemke, R & Woods, J. 1999)

It shows how difficult and stressful front line work can be. Often front-line staff is asked to perform many roles and through this it leads to conflict with customers or between staff employees. (Lovelock, Ch. & Wirtz, J. 2006)

There can be found the top 10 common mistakes employees make with customers- and what you can do to prevent them which are: Taking the customer for granted, Using jargon, speaking fast, giving short and clipped answers, not being proactive when a problem arises, not appearing like they care about the customer's complaint, being preoccupied with other tasks, interrupting the customer or no longer listening, making judgments about the buying power of a customer based upon his or her appearance, and arguing with the customer.

It gives many insights about front line positions and call centers but it does not give a clear view if the job performance of front line staff has a significant role in a customer's level of loyalty? In order to find out more about this question a survey with 25 questions has been handed out to 30 respondents.

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter describes the steps and different methods used in doing this study.

4.1 Research Purpose

Research purpose is the first step in conducting research and it means examining the reasons why research is being undertaken. The research purpose falls into three categories: exploration, description, and explanation.

4.1.1 Exploratory studies

This type of research is basically used to find out what is happening in little known or understood situation, in other words it is used mainly when the subject of study is relatively new (Stapleton L. 2009). So, the exploratory approach attempts to discover general information about a topic that might be new or not well understood.

4.1.2. Descriptive studies

The main focus of descriptive study is to provide an accurate description for something that is happening and it involves people, events, etc. The difference between descriptive and exploratory study is that exploratory study follows a format that is less structured and more flexible than descriptive study. This study is used when the research purpose is to explain, monitor and test hypotheses, and can also be used to a lesser extent to help make predictions.

4.1.3 Explanatory studies

Explanatory studies typically focus upon the casual relationships between variables that are substantively important and meaningful and looks for patterns (Stapleton L. 2009).

Summary: Considering the three categories of research purpose, I can say that my study applies in exploratory and explanatory categories. Since, this study is done to find out what is happening in little known situation it applies in the exploratory study. While trying to find the relationship between two things the study is also an explanatory study.

4.2 Research Approach

4.2.1 Inductive vs. Deductive

Usually deductive approach is described as working from the more general to the more specific, while inductive approach is described as moving from the specific to the general.

Summary: In this thesis there is been a deductive approach applied, as it has been done from the more general to the more specific.

4.2.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative

A way to distinguish between research methods is whether they collect and generate numerical or non-numerical data. A quantitative method means that data collection and data analysis generate numerical data. This kind of data usually includes descriptive and inferential statistics which are evaluated objectively, while emphasize is on hypothesis testing and verification. In contrast, a qualitative method the emphasis is on words rather on numbers and is more likely to be inductive and interpreting. Qualitative data are usually evaluated subjectively and emphasize is on description and discovery, while seeking psychologically rich understanding (Stapleton L. 2009).

Summary: In this research I have used both quantitative and qualitative data, because most questions are with answers which the respondents had to choose from and other open-ended where they were free to add their opinion and a wider answer to that question.

4.3 Research Strategy

A research strategy is a plan of action that gives direction to the way the study is being done. This plan is of high importance in order to stay focused and enhance the quality of the research and save time in the long run. It enables you to conduct research systematically.

4.3.1. Case Study

Case study is a research methodology more common in social science, and it is used to investigate in depth single individuals, groups, or events. A case study is most often used in exploratory and explanatory studies research with the ability to answer the question “why” as well as “what” and “how”. Quantitative and qualitative techniques can be applied for data collection in case study. (Stapleton L. 2009)

4.4 Sample Selection

In order to find the impact that front line employees have on customer satisfaction I had to make one sample selection; I had to choose the respondents of the questionnaire.

I choose 30 participants of different age, occupation and location. All these were people I know; friends, relatives and with whom I have contacts in my daily life. They were asked to express the behavior of employees of various businesses, and how it affected their level of satisfaction towards the company.

4.5 Data Collection

Since the aim of this research study is to find something new which was not found in previous literature, the data used in this study were primary data. Primary data means that primary data are collected specifically for the purpose for which the data are required, while secondary data comes from researched that are already carried out by someone else.

I have used primary data because the research objective was to find something new. During the research I have used also secondary data in order to find information for a general point of view. This secondary data I have found in various books, articles, etc. This secondary data was very useful and time saving.

The primary data was gathered through a questionnaire containing 25 questions. These questions were open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions give the respondents space and opportunity to express their fully opinion whereas the closed-ended questions limit the answers in a fixed number of questions where the respondent has to choose from.

These questionnaires were handed out by email to some respondents and to other face-to-face in order to be easier to translate the questionnaire since they were conducted in English, this was also very time consuming.

For the completion of this study I have used books, online books, online articles, various websites and the questionnaire.

4.6. Data Analysis

Two major approaches employed in summarizing the results of marketing research are tabulation and statistical analysis. Tabulation includes laying out data into easy-to-understand summary tables, which show the frequency of distribution which is tabulation of values that one or more variables take in a sample. Statistical analysis is undertaken to identify patterns that are not ease to see in the data (Proctor T. 2005).

My case study is a combination of an exploratory and explanatory study with a deductive approach. The questionnaires consisted both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The results of these questionnaires are put in tables in order to be easier-to understand.

5. RESULTS

The results chapter shows the questionnaires that I handed out to the respondents. Later it presents the tables regarding the findings and the explanation of the findings, and how do they relate with the literature review.

5.1. Respondents demographics

In the first table below there are all the personal information shown about the participants. There is information about their age, divided into four categories, their gender and occupation shown in numbers not percentage, and their location.

AGE	under 15	15-25	25-45	45-65	45-66	45-67
	1	24	5			
Gender	Male	Female				
	12	18				
Occupation	Student	Lawyer	Nurse	Singer	Engineer	Architect
	23	3	1	1	1	1
Location	Prishtine	Ferizaj	Prizren	Vushtrri	Gjakova	
	24	1	3	1	1	

Table 1. Respondents' demographics

5.2. Respondents contact with representative of company

1. The first question asks the respondents to remind their recent contact with any company in order to continue with further questions.

Do you recall your recent contact with any company?	Yes	No
	100%	

Table 2. Recent contact with a company

2. The 4 questions in the table below are all connected with the first one. If the answer of the first question is yes then the other 5 following questions have to be filled based on the representatives' behavior, performance, interpersonal and technical skills, his ability to resolve their question or issue and how does this affect their overall satisfaction towards the company. After each of the questions below was the question: How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company. In these questions I was able to see many interesting answers and in most of the respondents the way that particular representative acted and showed his willingness to help them had a tremendously high impact in their overall satisfaction towards the company as a whole. Some of the respondents did not respond to this question but when the below questions were fair or poor the overall satisfaction towards the company was low and they responded as extremely dissatisfied.

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Missing cases
How would you rate the representative's ability to help you or to get you to someone who could help you?	6.6%	26.6%	20%	6.6%	10%	30%
How would you rate the representative's overall knowledge of your problem or question?	10%	43.3%	20%	13.3%	13.3%	
How would you rate the representative on being courteous?	10%	33.3%	33.3%	6.6%	6.6%	10%
How would you rate the representative on helpfulness, a willingness to assist you?	20%	33.3%	30%	13.3%	3.3%	
How would rate the representative on being able to help you resolve your issue/need?	30%	33.3%	16.6%	13.3%	6.6%	

Table 3. Customer contact with a representative

5.3. Customer preferences regarding contact centers

3. The next question was concerning contact centers; by which method the respondents would like to contact with these contact centers. The characteristic of the below question is that in the last option which was other every respondent that circled that one added the option: personally, face-to-face, live contact etc, which included direct contact with the representative. It had the highest percentage 43.3% which means that most of the respondent would feel more comfortable in direct contact with the employee of a company.

	Phone	E-mail	Web Chat	Sms	Other (Face-to-face)
By which method would you like to contact with a contact center?	36.3%	6.6%		13.3%	43.3%

Table 4. Methods of contact preferred

4. In the below table we see that the highest percentage has the first answer in the question how would the customers feel and what would they do if a company pushes them to use self-service, 63.3% of the respondents would feel less loyal about that company. Self-service means no direct contact with any employee of the company which means you get the service by yourself, and because of that these respondent would automatically feel less loyal about that company, because it does not offer them direct contact with their employees. Following that answer with 16.6% there is negative Word-Of-Mouth by complaining to family and friends.

	Feel less loyal about that company	Stop doing business with that company	Send a complaint to the company	Complain to family and friends	None of the above
What would you do if a company pushes you to use self-service?					
	63.3%	6.6%	6.6%	16.6%	6.6%

Table 5. Self-service companies

5. In the following question which asks customers what frustrates them the most when dealing with a contact center most respondents said being on hold for a long time with 26.6% and immediately after this answer are the other 2 answers which are directly linked with staff

members the first one is not being able to speak to a live person with 23.3% and rude or unfriendly employees. Here we see the importance that the direct contact with an employee has to these respondents and the negative side if the staff is unfriendly which will have a negative impact.

What frustrates you the most when dealing with a contact center	Automated menu problems	Not being able to speak to a live person	Being on hold for a long time	Having to repeat information	Rude or unfriendly employees
	13.3%	23.3%	26.6%	16.6%	20%

Table 6. Problems occurring when contacting contact centers

5.4. Negative and Positive W-O-M (Word of mouth)

6. The 2 questions below ask the respondents if they would recommend a company with who they are or are NOT satisfied to friends and relatives and why. These questions are linked with WOM (word of mouth). In the first question 96.6% of the respondent answered positively the question if they would recommend the company with who they are satisfied to friends or relatives, and most of them said they would recommend it in order to share that good experience, and to do that company a favor. The other question in which they answered negatively 86.6%, they said they wouldn't because they linked it with the trust their friends have in them, and that if they would recommend it, it wouldn't be fair towards the people who trust them.

	Yes	No	Missing cases
How likely are you to recommend a company with who you are satisfied to a friend or relative?	96.6%		3.3%
How likely are you to recommend a company with who you are NOT satisfied to a friend or relative?	10%	86.6%	3.3%

Table 7. Customers recommending companies to friends or relatives.

5.5. Customers repurchasing products from companies with who they are or are NOT satisfied

7. The 2 following questions ask the respondents about their purchase behavior towards the companies with whom their satisfied or NOT. The first one is positively answered with 96.6% who said that they would continually products from that company with whom their satisfied and the second question they answered never again with 66.6%.

	Yes, Continually	Yes, but buy less products	Rarely	Never again
How likely are you to repurchase products/services from a Company with who you are satisfied?	96.6 %		3.3%	
How likely are you to repurchase products/services from a Company with who you are satisfied?		6.6%	26.6%	66.6%

Table 8. Repurchasing products

5.6. Customers' loyalty

8. The following question asks the respondents concerning their loyalty as customers towards a company and the relationship that they have with that particular company. Following this is another question asking them how does this company show the appreciation for them as being loyal and most of the respondents said by sending messages over the phone and noticing them about any discounts.

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Missing cases
If you are a loyal customer to a company how would you rate the overall quality of the relationship with that company?	13.3%	43.4%	16.6%		3.3%	23.3%

Table 9. Customers' relationship with companies to whom they are loyal

5.7. Factors that influences on customers' loyalty

9. The next question asks the respondents if the behavior of any staff member had an impact on their loyalty towards that company and most of them 60% answered yes, which means that most of them are influenced by the behavior of the staff member which has direct contact with them.

	Yes	No	Missing cases
Would you say that the behavior of any staff member had an impact on your loyalty towards that company?			
	60%	10%	30%

Table 10. Staff impact on customers' loyalty

10. Next the respondent were asked what has the biggest influence on their loyalty towards a company and the answered product quality as the highest percentage with 50% and immediately after that comes customer service with 43.3% following price 6.6% and brand with 3.3%

	Price	Customer service	Brand name/reputation	Product quality
What has the biggest influence on your loyalty to a company?				
	6.6%	43.3%	3.3%	50%

Table 11. Factors that influences on customers loyalty

5.8. Customer satisfaction in Kosovo

11. The last question asks the participants about the level of their satisfaction as customers with customer service of companies in Kosovo. Most of them 60% answered that the customer service levels are average in our country and 20% answered below average and the other 20% above average. They were also asked why are they satisfied and why are they NOT satisfied with the customer service of the companies in Kosovo. Most of the respondents are dissatisfied with the customer service level in Kosovo saying that the service sometimes is below average and how companies are mostly interested in increasing their sales and making money by not taking in consideration the customers' wants which should be their main priority. They complained mostly about the staff members which need to gain more knowledge about the

product/service that their selling and need to be trained more in the way they approach the customer.

1 is extremely dissatisfied and 5 is extremely satisfied, how would you rate your level of overall satisfaction with customer service of companies in Kosovo	1	2	3	4	5
		20%	60%	20%	

Table 12. The level of customer satisfaction in Kosovo

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter shows the results of the finding and how they answered the research questions done in the beginning.

6.1. RQ1. How does an employee's attitude or behavior influence in the customers' overall satisfaction towards the company?

In the literature chapter there are many definitions, examples and surveys presented in order to answer this first question. The literature gives clear view and statistics such as the survey done by Harris Interactive on behalf of Right Now Technologies via its Quick Query omnibus product, about the question why consumers stop doing business with a company resulting with 73 % because of rude staff, and 51 % because of unknowledgeable staff. (Bozeman, M. 2010)

Rucci *et al.* (1998) analyzed the employee-customer profit chain at the company Sears Roebuck and Co. In their model, employee behavior is explained by three variables: attitude about the job, attitude about the company and employee retention. They have estimated that a five-point improvement in employee attitudes drives a 1.3 point rise in customer satisfaction, which in turn will drive a 0.5 per cent improvement in revenue growth. (Vilares J. M. and Cohelo S. P., 2000)

It also has been taken in consideration when done the questionnaire which was handed out to 30 respondents. The first 5 questions were asked to be filled based on the representatives' behavior, performance, interpersonal and technical skills, his ability to resolve their question or issue and how does this affect their overall satisfaction towards the company. After each of the questions below was the question: How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company. In these questions I was able to see many interesting answers and in most of the respondents the way that particular representative acted and showed his willingness to help them had a tremendously high impact in their overall satisfaction towards the company as a whole. Some of the respondents did not respond to this question but when the below questions were fair or poor the overall satisfaction towards the company was low and they responded as extremely dissatisfied.

6.2. RQ2. Does employee satisfaction have a direct impact on customer satisfaction?

The second question links directly employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. This question was answered in the literature review. Employee satisfaction is seen as how happy employees are with their job, their work environment, their relationship with their supervisors, and other staff members. (Brief, A. P., & Weiss, H. M. 2001) According to Sure Vista Solution and their survey employee satisfaction is important because committed and engaged employees create satisfied customers.

Any organization's employees who have any form of customer contact need to be carefully trained in customer satisfaction techniques. (Adams, C.W. 2007) There is a strong positive relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. (Schmitt & Allscheid 1995)

Based on an analysis of 7,939 business units in 36 companies, there were found relationships, large enough to have substantial practical value, between unit-level employee satisfaction-engagement and business-unit outcomes such as customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee turnover, and accidents. (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002)

6.2. RQ3. Does the job performance of front line staff have a significant role in a customers' loyalty?

The third question is concerning the impact of the front line performance has on a customers' loyalty. In the questionnaire the respondents were asked if they are loyal to any company, and if any staff member had an impact on their loyalty towards that particular company and 60% of them answered positively while only 10% asked negatively and 30% were missing cases.

Further in the questionnaire there were questions regarding companies that push customer to use self-service and how would they feel or what would they do about that. The respondents (63.3%) answered that they would feel less loyal about that company because of no direct contact with any staff member.

.They were also asked how likely they were to repurchase products/services from a company with who they are satisfied 96.9% answered yes continually by stating that they would become loyal customers. And 66.6% answered that they would never buy again products from a company with whom they are NOT satisfied.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE WORKS

The recommendations and future works chapter as understood from its name gives recommendations for theory, and future works which may be very helpful for these 2 categories.

7.1. Implications for Theory

The main focus of this research paper was to find out everything concerning employee attitude, behavior and performance and its relationship with customer satisfaction.

According to a Harvard University study “The Service Profit Chain” is a theory which demonstrates how leading companies’ link profit and growth to loyalty, satisfaction and value. **Profit and growth** – Most companies strive towards profit and growth. **Customer loyalty** – Companies with profit and growth are characterized by a large number of loyal customers. **Customer satisfaction** – Loyal customers result from satisfied customers. **Value** – Satisfaction depends on the company’s ability to create value for the customer. **Employee loyalty** – Value is created by loyal employees. **Employee productivity** – Satisfied and loyal employees are far more productive. **Employee satisfaction** – Employee loyalty is driven by employee satisfaction. **Internal quality** – engage employees and ensure employee satisfaction the company has to build up the best possible internal quality (Heskett J.L Sasser E. L, and Schlesinger L. A., 1997).

Any organization’s employees who have any form of customer contact need to be carefully trained in customer satisfaction techniques. This may be attendance at some form of formal training program or careful instruction from experienced department managers who are well versed in these techniques. Losing 68% of potential repeat business is clearly unacceptable for any growth-oriented business organization. (Adams, C.W. 2007)

In the future there can be examples or models shown where the direct link between customer satisfaction and employees with front-line position is presented. There can also models be regarding the employees’ behavior and performance and its link in the customers level of their overall satisfaction to a company or his level of loyalty towards that company.

7.2. Implications for company

This research comes to many implications for companies in general, since it came to findings that customer satisfaction is of high importance to any company which is oriented in a long lasting life in the market today.

I think that the fact that 60% of the respondents from the questionnaire said that the behavior of a staff member had an impact on their loyalty towards a company as a customer, shows the influence and the direct link that staff employees have on customers and their loyalty. More than 90% of them said that they would recommend the company with who they are satisfied to friends or relative, that means automatically positive publicity through word of mouth and more than 80% said that they would not recommend a company with who they are NOT

satisfied. Below are some recommendations for companies who are willing to reconsider their priorities and become more customer-focused culture and with customer-friendly system:

- 1) Customer complaints can serve as a very helpful way of feedback that is the reason why company should start applying various tools available to resourceful service such as: Focus Groups, Surveys, Critical Incidents reports, Advisory Panels and One-on-One Conversations.
- 2) Many researches done in other more developed countries have found out interesting results regarding the questions that concerns businesses the most; why do customers stop doing business with them and 73% said because of rude staff and 51% others because of unknowledgeable staff. Companies should focus on this issue mostly.
- 3) Companies should give more importance in the training of employees. They should teach the new recruits the core values of the company such as job commitment, excellence and great service, mutual respect, courtesy and integrity, interpersonal and technical skills and product/ service knowledge.
- 4) Companies should give importance to employee satisfaction since it has direct link in customer satisfaction, and in the reducing of the cost of turnover.

7.3. Recommendations for Future Researches

Through this whole research process I have understood that the link between customer satisfaction and every kind of activity which includes employees with direct contact to customers is very strong and of high importance. This link must be taken seriously by every company but also by everyone else who is interested in doing another research regarding this topic.

In the future researches I would recommend and suggest that:

- 1) In these kind of research the sampling kind be widened demographically and geographically in order to have a more expanded knowledge and data.
- 2) In the future the research can contain another questionnaire which can be handed out also to the employees, in order not to have the opinion of only the side of the customer.
- 3) In future questionnaires the number of questions can be bigger thus including more detailed questions so giving deeper insights regarding this topic.
- 4) Another interesting question would be if self service is really decreasing the changes of customer loyalty towards a company.
- 5) It would be very useful to do a research on what importance do these companies pay to the selection, and training of the employees and to the customer service itself.

Even though these topics were merely discussed in this thesis they still can be elaborated and explored in a more wide way for company's to see were to focus more and how to improve their performance.

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9. CUSTOMERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was handed out to 30 respondents during October and November 2010.

Dear respondents,

This questionnaire is of high importance to me and of great help for my Bachelor Thesis. It has overall 25 questions that have to do with your level of satisfaction as a customer, or even a loyal customer to a company. My main goal is to find out the impact of a company's staff and their contact to customers on those customers satisfaction level on the company as a whole.

Please, try to fill the questions as you feel like and the open ended questions with as much information and opinion as possible. I assure you that the personal questions will be confidential.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Besiana

Confidential Information

Name _____

Surname _____

Gender

Male

Female

Age:

15 - 25

25 - 45

45 - 65

Occupation: _____

Location: _____

Do you recall your recent contact with any company?

- Yes
- No

Thinking about your most recent contact, how would you rate the representative's ability to help you or to get you to someone who could help you? Would you say ...?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company?

How would you rate the representative's overall knowledge of your problem or question? Would you say ...?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company?

How would you rate the representative on being courteous? Would you say ...?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company?

How would you rate the representative on helpfulness, in other words, a willingness to assist you? Would you say ...?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company?

**How would you rate the representative on being able to help you resolve your issue/need?
Would you say ...?**

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

How does this affect your overall satisfaction towards the company?

By which methods would you like to communicate with a contact center?

- Phone
- E-mail
- Web Chat
- Sms
- Other _____

What do you do if a company pushes you to use self-service?

- Feel less loyal about that company
- Stop doing business with that company
- Send a complaint to the company
- Complain to family and friends
- None of the above

What frustrates you the most when dealing with a contact center?

- Automated menu problems
- Not being able to speak to a live person
- Being on hold for a long time
- Having to repeat information
- Rude or unfriendly employees

How likely are you to recommend a company with who you are satisfied to a friend or relative? Would you say the chances are ...?

- Yes
- No
- Why? _____

How likely are you to recommend a company with who you are NOT satisfied to a friend or relative? Would you say the chances are ...?

- Yes
- No
- Why? _____

How likely are you to repurchase products and services from a Company with who you are satisfied? Would you say you would purchase...?

- Yes, Continually
- Yes, but buy less products
- Rarely
- Never again

How likely are you to repurchase products and services from a Company with who you are NOT satisfied? Would you say you would purchase...?

- Yes, Continually
- Yes, but buy less products
- Rarely
- Never again

Are you a loyal customer to any company? If yes, how would you rate the overall quality of your relationship with that company?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

If the above answer is yes, please answer the questions below.

Do they take the fact that you are loyal to them in consideration, if yes how do they express it?

Would you say that the behavior of any staff member had an impact on your loyalty towards that company?

- Yes
- No

Why? _____

What has the biggest influence on your loyalty to a company?

- Price
- Customer service
- Brand name/reputation
- Product quality

Could you please write about the importance of a staff member whose job is direct contact with you as a customer?

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents "Extremely dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Extremely satisfied," how would you rate your level of overall satisfaction with customer service of Companies in Kosovo?

- 1 2 3 4 5
-

Why do you say that? What specifically are you satisfied or dissatisfied with customer service of companies?
