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The Effect of Reward and Employee Satisfaction on Customer Satisfaction among Private University Students in Burundi

Emmanuel Kwizera
School of Business Administration, International Leadership University-Burundi
Corresponding Author: Emmanuel Kwizera

ABSTRACT:- This study set out to investigate the effect of Reward and Employee Satisfaction on Customer Satisfaction among private University students in Burundi. This study was guided by four specific objectives such as to: establish the relationship between employee reward and customer satisfaction, determine the relationship between employee reward, service quality and customer satisfaction, examine the relationship between employee reward and employee satisfaction, and assess the relationship between employee satisfaction and service quality among private universities students in Burundi. A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study with a sample size of 219 selected using stratified random and purposive sampling. The data obtained was analyzed using correlation, cross tabulation and regression in order to understand how the ^{variables} under study impact on customer satisfaction.

The findings show a strong positive relationship between employee reward and customer satisfaction (r = .781**, p<.01), employee reward and employee satisfaction (r = .676**, p<.01), employee reward and service quality (r = .755**, p<.01), service quality and customer satisfaction(r = .746**, p<.01).There is a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and service quality(r = .666**, p<.01). The results show a positive relationship between employee reward, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction, with the three variables having the potential to determine 83.4% of the customer satisfaction. It is paramount important for managers to reward employees so that they become happy with the work since this will provide effective customer satisfaction. This study recommends the universities to build up the commitment among employees by rewards and attain both individual and institutional objectives. Keeping employees satisfied with their careers should be a major priority for every employer because employee satisfaction is essential to the success of any business (Branham, 2005).

Keywords:- Reward, Employee satisfaction, Service quality, and Customer satisfaction

I.   INTRODUCTION

Reward system is an important instrument to be used in management to motivate employees in a desired ways. In order words, reward systems should be used to attract people to keep coming to work, and motivate them to perform to the high levels. Rewards are what employees receive for performing well. Sometimes these rewards come from the organization in the form of money, recognition and promotions (Bratton, 2003). Rewards consist also of feelings from having performed well in work. It can be said that rewards are very powerful motivators of performance (Malhotra and Prowse, 2007). Employee reward covers how people are rewarded in accordance with their value to an organization. It is about both financial and non-financial rewards and embraces the strategies, policies, structures and processes used to develop and maintain reward systems.

The aim of employee reward policies and practices is to help attract, retain and motivate high-quality people (Goldstein, 2003). Thus, employee satisfaction is a measure of how happy workers are with their job and working environment. Keeping morale high among workers can be of tremendous benefit to any company, as happy workers will be more likely to produce more, take fewer days off, and stay loyal to the company (Jessica, 2012). Employee satisfaction is used also to describe whether employees are happy and contented and fulfilling

their desires and needs at work. Many measures purport that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, employee goal achievement, and positive employee morale in the workplace (Susan, 2007).

II.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The current global climate in tertiary education places students as primary consumers. As such, students are becoming more conscious of their consumer rights and of gaps between their expectations of service delivery and the reality of that service they receive. Globally, Statistics indicate that more than 40% of all college entrants leave higher education without earning a degree, 75% of these students drop out in the first two years of college, and institutions can expect that 56% of a typical entering class cohort will not graduate (Ali and Oscar, 2004). More recent statistics indicate that 26.4 % of the freshmen do not return for the following fall semester and 46.2 % of the students do not graduate from college (Tinto, 2011). In Africa that service excellence culture has gradually eroded due mainly to decayed and inadequate infrastructure unstable academic calendar as a result of incessant strikes by lecturers and students, insufficient funding, lack of an innovative research and development, weak university-industry linkages, shortages of qualified academic staff, and outdated teaching methods (Saint et al., 2004).

In private and public university in Burundi, there are challenges in obtaining reading materials, IT services, brain drain, inadequate human resource policies and insufficient salaries. It was found that 60% of students were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching, the knowledge and skills of teaching assistants, students' assistants; and the French proficiency of some lecturers. More than 20% of students expressed dissatisfaction with library and computer laboratory services (Burundi National Council for Higher Education, 2017). This study investigated how reward and employee satisfaction affect the quality service to satisfy the customers in Burundi private universities.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this paper was to examine the effect of reward and employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction among private university students in Burundi with a view of promoting customer service, proper management of complaints, clear understanding of customer.

The study was therefore guided by the following specific objectives:
(i)   To examine the relationship between employee reward and customer satisfaction among private universities students in Burundi?
(ii)   To determine the relationship between employee reward and employee satisfaction among private universities students in Burundi?
(iii) To evaluate the relationship between employee rewards, service quality and customer satisfaction among private universities students in Burundi?
(iv)   To assess the relationship between employee satisfaction and service quality among private universities students in Burundi?

III.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Reward presents all the tangible benefits and provisions an employee obtain as a part of employment relationship (Milkovich and Newman, 2004); while Malhotra and Prowse (2007) illustrate that "work rewards" indicate the benefits, workers receive from their workplace and are considered the determinants of job commitment and satisfaction. Bratton (2003) defines "rewards" as all the cash, non-cash and psychological payments provided by an organization in return of their contribution. Employees who feel valued tend to work harder, in part because the hope for additional financial reward in the future, and also because they feel that their contributions are recognized and important (Mullins, 2005). Financial rewards are also advantageous to employees because they increase the likelihood of personnel staying with the company, allowing employers to retain experience and knowledge base, and providing workers with a measure of familiarity and stability (Lengnick et al., 2009). Therefore, Steven and Howard (2005) state that employees who contribute to meeting organizational goals or who improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the organization can be rewarded.

Awards should be used as a tool to recognize past performance as well as motivate employees to continue high performance. Michael (2008) stated that employee satisfaction increases significantly when people perceive balance between their work and personal lives experience. Besides that, exists several programs have been developed by organizations to improve the satisfaction of the employees (Huang, 2008).

Thus, Service quality means establishing requirements and specifications. Once established, the quality goal is based primarily on satisfying customers' needs (SureshChandan et al., 2002). From the customers' perspective, service quality means how well the goods/services provided by the organization meet or exceed

customer expectations (Voss et al., 2004). Goldstein (2003) suggests that when it comes to customers, it is their perceptions of the quality of service one offers that determines success. The final measure of quality customer service is simply how the customer perceives it. According to Zeithaml et al. (2013), states that consumer satisfaction is often influenced by other people. For example, in the university context, the satisfaction of students is not only influenced by individual perceptions, but is also greatly influenced by the experiences, behavior, and views of other students. Student satisfaction feedback is regarded as an important information requirement for the quality assurance process in higher education (Harvey, 2001).

However, customer satisfaction is as an overall evaluation of the performance of an offering to date. This overall satisfaction has a strong positive effect on customer loyalty intentions across a wide range of product and service categories (Gustaffsson et al., 2005). The satisfaction judgment is related to all the experiences made with a certain business concerning its given products, the sales process, and the after-sale service. Whether the customer is satisfied after purchase also depends on the offer's performance in relation to the customer's expectation. Customers from their expectation from past buying experience, friends 'and associates 'advice, and marketers 'and competitors' information and promises (Kotler, 2000). As customer satisfaction is a combination of a customer's prepurchase expectation and post purchase evaluation of the shopping experience (Turban, 2002); a positive experience will result in a satisfied customer. A business benefits from satisfying its customers through increased revenues due to customer retention and new customers due to word-of-mouth endorsements. Therefore, organizations need to understand that to what extend their customers would be satisfy. There are many benefits for a company from a high customer satisfaction level: It heighten customer loyalty and prevents customers churn, it lowers customers price sensitivity, reduces the cost of failed marketing and of new customer creation, and reduces operating costs due to customer number increases.

Employee Reward and Customer Satisfaction

Various scholars found the relationship between employee reward and customer satisfaction. Gerald and Dorothee (2004) found that rewards are significantly related to professionalism and job satisfaction and to customer satisfaction. They supported the argument that job satisfaction for professionals is derived in part from what professional perceives from job. Schaufeli et al. (2002), stresses on the importance of rewards in order to combat burnout, which is typically experienced by most employees on the job and has a relationship with how one would serve customers. According to Allen and Helms (2007), an employer may use rewards such as casual dress day, employee of the month parking or a plaque to recognize work-related actions and this leads to satisfaction both to an employee and to a customer. However, even if all those scholars found the relationship between the study variables, they failed to show statistical evidence in their findings.

Employee Reward and Employee Satisfaction

The relationship between employee reward and employee satisfaction is examined by many authors. According to a study conducted by Ahmad et al. (2010), employees are highly likely to feel 'rewarded' and 'motivated' when they know that they are able to get fair pay with regards to the amount of work that they do. A study conducted by Hinkin and Shriesheim (2004) concluded that there exists a positive relationship between the rewards provided by the management of a company, and the job satisfaction felt by the workers, and the effectiveness of the work produced. Removing rewards that are 'specific to particular organizational performance' may give way towards a reduction in the effectiveness of the employee with regards to his/her work, job dissatisfaction and 'a lack of role clarity. Adding rewards into the company culture adds an extra bonus to the employees above and beyond their regular salary and benefits. They will feel more appreciated and thus will be more engaged in the interests of the organization.

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Many researchers have studied the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Prior studies have considered service quality as an antecedent of customer satisfaction. Empirical findings showed that service quality is related to customer satisfaction (Babakus et al., 2004). Customers who are satisfied with the perceived service quality will have a favorable emotional response, i.e., customer satisfaction. However, scholars did not highlight on the measurements of service quality and customer satisfaction. The authors brought findings from banking sector which may be different with education sector.

Employee Satisfaction and Service Quality

The relationship between an employee satisfaction and service quality is now examined. Failure to provide employees with opportunities to grow within the company results in employee frustration (Clutterbuck, 2007). It is important that employers care about the happiness of their employees. Recent statistics show that

throughout their careers, American workers hold an average of eight jobs (Rudman, 2003). The rate of turnover because employees are unhappy is alarming. The results of an employee satisfaction survey revealed that seventy five percent of employees who had considered leaving their jobs did so due to lack of employee growth and recognition programs (Cochran, 2006). Obviously when employees are happy, it is easier to meet the organizational goals such as better service, fewer accidents, improved attendance and a decrease in the number of grievances field (Silva, 2006). Then, Yoon and Suh (2003) showed that satisfied employees are more likely to work harder and provide better services via organizational citizenship behaviors. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more involved in their employing organizations, and more dedicated to delivering services with a high level of quality. Previous research has also suggested that loyal employees are more eager to and more capable of delivering a higher level of service quality (Silvestro and Cross, 2000).

On the basis of literature above, there is enough literature on the relationship between reward, satisfaction, and service quality on customer satisfaction. However, most of those studies done have been in various sector and the researcher did not come across one study done on employee reward, employee satisfaction, and service quality on customer satisfaction in Burundian private universities. There is a need to conduct such studies within Burundian context, to assess the level of effect of employee reward, employee satisfaction, and service quality on customer satisfaction in Burundian private universities. Also, there is no statistical evidence among the relationship between the study variables. So, this study will contribute to previous literature. This study seeks to look what can be done to improve employee reward to boost the satisfaction of employees, service quality and cement customer satisfaction.

IV.   METHODOLOGY

This study used cross sectional and descriptive as research design. The study targeted mainly staff of Light university of Bujumbura, Hope African University and students of both universities. The total population of 267 people was used. In this study, stratified random sampling technique was used to select students and purposive sampling technique was used to select administrators, academic staff, and support staff. The sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula (1960) whereby the total population of 267 gave the sample size of 219 following a confidence level of 95%. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the respondents using a self-administered questionnaire designed for both students and employees.

The secondary data was obtained from the available literature review, text books, journals, reports, newspapers and research magazines. The validity of the research instrument was explored using the Content Validity Index (CVI) while the reliability of the research instrument was explored using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. Results showed that the research instrument was both valid and reliable as indicated by the Cronbach Alpha values and the Content Validity Indices which were above 0.700 for all cases. Data collected from the field was coded and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version (20.0). The data was then presented using cross tabulation to describe sample characteristics, and Pearson correlation was used to establish the relationship between the study variables while regression analysis was used to establish the combined effect on the study variables.

V.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the respondents' views on whether reward, employee satisfaction, and service quality affect on customer satisfaction among private university students in Burundi. Table below shows a sum up of participants' responses.

Relationships between the variables

Relationships between the study variables were explored using the Pearson (r) correlations and these were presented so as to address the study objectives.

Table 1: Correlation between the study Variables

	Employee Rewards	Employee Satisfaction	Service Quality	Customer Satisfaction
Employee Rewards	1.000			
Employee Satisfaction	.676**	1.000		
Service Quality	.755**	.666**	1.000	
Customer Satisfaction	.781**	.876**	.746**	1.000
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
Source: Primary data computed				

Employee Reward and Customer Satisfaction

The results showed that employee rewards were positively related to the customer satisfaction in the study (r = .781**, p<.01). Rewards are significantly related to professionalism and job satisfaction and to customer satisfaction (Gerald and Dorothee, 2004). An employer may use rewards such as casual dress day, employee of the month parking or a plaque to recognize work-related actions and this leads to satisfaction both to an employee and to a customer (Allen and Helms, 2007). The result is in agreement also with Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Employee Reward and Employee Satisfaction

The results indicated a positive relationship between the employee reward and employee satisfaction (r = .676**, p<.01). The results showed that there exists a positive relationship between the rewards provided by the management of a company, and the job satisfaction felt by the workers, and the effectiveness of the work produced. Removing rewards that are 'specific to particular organizational performance' may give way towards a reduction in the effectiveness of the employee with regards to his/her work, job dissatisfaction and 'a lack of role clarity (Hinkin and Schriesheim, 2004). The result of this study is also in the agreement with (Ahmed et al., 2010).

Employee Reward, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The results indicated a positive relationship between Employee Reward and Service quality(r = .755**, p<.01). Additionally, a positive relationship exists between Service quality and Customer satisfaction(r = .746**, p<.01).This indicates that if employees are well rewarded they will become happy and it is easier to meet the organizational goals such as better service, fewer accidents, improved attendance and a decrease in the number of grievances field (Cochran, 2006).To have a through satisfaction firstly the good working condition is needed to bring satisfied employees which leads to loyal employees and by preparing all this, good production would be followed which influenced on customer satisfaction and make them loyal and as mentioned before high profit is about customer retention (Zairi, 2000).

Employee Satisfaction and Service Quality

The results showed a positive relationship between Employee Satisfaction and Service Quality (r = .666**, p<.01). This indicates that if employees are satisfied, they are more likely to work harder and provide better services via organizational citizenship behaviors (Yoon and Suh, 2003). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more involved in their employing organizations, and more dedicated to delivering services with a high level of quality (Silvestro and Cross, 2000).

Regression Analysis

The regression model was conducted so as to deduce the degree to which the Employee Rewards, Employee Satisfaction and Service Quality can predict Customer Satisfaction.

Table2: Regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.396	.171		2.314	.024
	Employee Rewards	.164	.053	.266	3.103	.003
	Employee Satisfaction	.691	.087	.599	7.939	.000
	Service Quality	.108	.063	.145	1.711	.092
Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction						
R		.918				
R Square		.842				
Adjusted R Square		.834				
F Statistic		101.182				
Sig.		.000				
Source: Primary data computed						

The regression model as indicated in the table 2 above shows that the Employee Rewards, Employee Satisfaction and Service Quality can predict 83.4% of the increment or decrease in the Customer Satisfaction (Adjusted R Square=.834). The regression model was as well significant (sig. <.01). Satisfaction of customer will be the results of efforts towards employee reward, employee satisfaction and service quality.

Factor Analysis Results
Factor Analysis for Employee Rewards
Results indicated that Employee Benefits, Payments and Reward System were the main attributes of the employee rewards and all together, these attributes explain 96.891% of the variable. Under employee benefits, the university provides transportation allowances for those who live in far areas at 79.7%, followed by the university provides bonuses for workers according to their post and consistent with their level of performance at 78.5%, and the university provides financial incentives to employees when they work professionally at 77.5%. Under payments, the university provides overtime payments to employees after working hours at 82.2%, followed by all the university staff are paid and rewarded according to their experience and performance at 79.7%. Under reward system, the university pays its workers well at 84.6%.

Factor Analysis for Employee Satisfaction
Results indicated that the work environment, job motivation and empowerment were the main attributes of the employee satisfaction and all together, these attributes explain 94.194% of the variable. Under work environment, health insurance granted by the university covered all members of the employees 'family at 84.6%, followed by how would you rate the overall performance of the above mentioned features of responsiveness of your university at 83.1%, and the university provides appropriate offices and well-furnished ones for employees at 82.9%. Under job motivation, I feel I have job security in this university at 75.7%, followed by I am satisfied with the physical condition of work at 74%, and in this university overtime work is rewarded adequately at 73.8%. Under empowerment, I am satisfied with the security of my job and freedom to choose my method of working at 85.4%.

Factor Analysis for Service Quality
Results indicated that the institutional loyalty and reliability were the main attributes of service quality and all together, these attributes explain 93.649% of the variable. Under institutional loyalty, I have a clear understanding of the quality of work that the university seeks to deliver at 80.9%, followed by there is a strong commitment to delivering services to the customers' expectations at 77.1%, and our work and activities are mindful of the university image at 76.8%. Under reliability, the work I do relates to my educational background at 82.5%, followed by when the university promises to do something by a certain time, it does so at 81.2%.

Factor Analysis for Customer Satisfaction
Results indicated that customer service, institutional flexibility and complaints management were the main components of the customer satisfaction and all together, these attributes explain 94.461% of the variable. Under customer service, students are supervised well in their research and in field at 85.5%, followed by the university staff should give us prompt service at 84.8%, and the teachers are available when I have questions at 84.3%, and university web page contain correct and useful information about the services and resources at 83.3%. Under institutional flexibility, I am able to choose the courses I am interested in at 88.3%, followed by students are given timetables for exams in time and exams are given in time at 84.7%, and the courses of my program are interesting and stimulating at 80%. Under complaints management, complaints made by customers should be immediately inquired the university at 61.9%.

VI.   CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it is widely acknowledged that employees with positive attitudes towards their leaders and working environment can contribute to significant organizational outcomes; which can include customer satisfaction, loyalty, and increased profits. Customer satisfaction is critical in the service industries. Rewards and recognition are often used to encourage good service behavior from employees (Guillermo, 2009). Employee satisfaction described whether employees are happy and contented and fulfilling their desires and needs at work. Treating employees with respect, providing regular employee recognition, empowering employees, offering above industry-average benefits and compensation, providing employee perks and company activities, and positive management within a success framework of goals, measurements , and expectations contribute to employee satisfaction (Steven and Son, 2008).

RECOMMENDATION

From the above conclusion derived from research findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

(i)   The Universities should reward employees, ensure fair payment, promotion, employee benefits and recognition as this will increase organization performance;

(ii)   There should be a strong commitment to delivering services to the customers' expectations and a clear understanding of the quality of work that it seeks to deliver;

(iii)   The university should also do what it promises to the students and employees and strive to reward their employees, just to get them satisfied so that they can provide good service to the customers and at the end will contribute to the customer satisfaction;

AUTHORS DECLARATION

We declare that this study is an original research by our research team and we agree to publish it in the journal.

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*Corresponding Author: Emmanuel Kwizera
School of Business Administration, International Leadership University-Burundi