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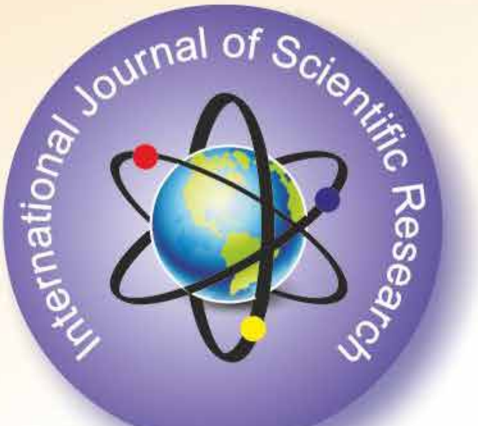
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Research Paper

Assessing Beneficiary Satisfaction with Service Delivery of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Management

KEYWORDS : Beneficiary satisfaction, Service Delivery, NGOs

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ABSTRACT

This paper sought to assess and analyse beneficiary satisfaction with service delivery of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) within Assam, one of the North Eastern States of India. The main problem of this study was whether beneficiaries' are satisfied with service delivery of NGOs in Assam. The study was basically a survey that used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The findings indicate that irrespective of types of NGOs in Assam, client satisfaction is significantly different among the NGOs The study found that Desire and Expectation Disconfirmations collectively and individually explain overall beneficiary satisfaction significantly among NGOs in Assam.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Organizations, both profits and non profits, in today's dynamic world are increasingly leaving antiquated operational philosophies and strategies to the adoption of more client-driven initiatives that seek to understand, attract, retain and build intimate long term relationship with clients (Kotler, 2006; Gronroos, C 1994; Paradise-Tornow, 1991; Narver and Slater, 1990). This paradigm shift has undauntedly led to the growing interest in client relationship management initiatives that aim at ensuring client satisfaction and retention, among other things (Thompson, 2004; Gronroos et al., 1996; Xu et al, 2002; Dyche, 2001; Ryals & Knox, 2001; Stone, 2000).

Client satisfaction is central to the client-centric paradigm shift, and has gained much attention from scholars and as it has become one of the cardinal means for achieving quality improvement programs, and one of the crucial foci of strategic management in all types of organizations that have long-term perspective for growth. This is because of the intriguing findings, that satisfied clients are more likely to remain loyal and committed to an organization. (Heskett et al., 1994; Heskett et al., 1997; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

1.2 Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

The problem of this study is propelled by the need to empirically measure beneficiary satisfaction with service delivery of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Assam. The state of client satisfaction with service delivery is not clear as there is scanty documentation of the issue. In view of the above, the main problem of this study is: Are beneficiaries satisfied with the service quality delivered by NGOs in Assam?

1.3 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to only four reputed NGOs, viz; Shanti Sadhana Ashram (SSA), North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), Deshabandhu Club (DBC) and Bosco Reach Out (BRO) in Assam and their operations within Assam. Furthermore, this study did not attempt to measure and analyse beneficiary satisfaction with specific services delivered by each of the NGOs in Assam. Finally, the sample for this study is delimited to a sizeable one thousand (1000) respondents.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Significance of Client Satisfaction and its Measurement

Client satisfaction measurement (CSM) is not an end in self; it is a useful means to achieving several objectives of both profit and nonprofit organizations (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Gronroos, 1991; Reichheld 1996 and Kotler & Keller 2006).

2.2 Determinants of Client Satisfaction (CS)

A lot of factors that drive client satisfaction need to be examined in order to reliably measure it. In the work of many scholars and practitioners, CS is found to be driven by the quality of service and the client service experiences (Oliver, R.L., 1980; 1993a; Parasuraman, A., et al., 1988, Lovelock, 1991, 1992, 2001, 2000; Lovelock C. & Wirtz J.2007; Gronroos, C., 1994, 2000, 2001; Yonggui Wang & Hing-Po Lo 2002; Kotler P. & Keller K. L., 2006). It is generally accepted by most scholars that service quality basically relates to what the client perceives of the product/service performance.

It has been found out that expectation plays a major role in determining satisfaction. This view was herald by the proponents of popular expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver 1980; 1993; Parasuraman, A., et al., 1988,). According to this theory, the client is satisfied if the performance of product/service is equal to his/her expectations (positive disconfirmation) and he/she is dissatisfied if the product/service performance is perceived to be below his/her expectation (negative disconfirmation). If expectation exceeds perceived performance, the client is highly satisfied. Another perspective of the disconfirmation is that client satisfaction relates to a comparison of client perceive quality with perceived performance, rather than comparing expectation with perceived performance (Gronroos 2001).

2.3 Approaches to Determining Client Satisfaction

A well defined conceptualization of CS is not enough; there must be a clearly workable approach to determining it. Various approaches have been suggested as effective but a meaning choice of any is contingent on several factors.

2.4 Client Satisfaction Measurement Models

However important client satisfaction is, it must be measurable in order to provide scientific bases for managerial decisions. Many measurement models have been developed and applied to measure client satisfaction, though not all have been empirically validated. Oh and Parks, (1997) identified nine methods for measuring CS, which are: expectancy disconfirmation, assimilation or cognitive dissonance, contrast, assimilation-contrast, equity, attribution, comparison-level, generalized negativity and value-precept.Out of the many theories the most widely used is the disconfirmation theories and client satisfaction index." We therefore review satisfaction indices and disconfirmation theories that form the pivot of this study and justify our choice of these methods.

2.5 Client Satisfaction Indices

In this study, we will use the MnCSI to measure overall client satisfaction with service delivery of the studied NGOs. We chose the MnCSI because it combines responses to three questions that ask about the same idea- total satisfaction. Interestingly the model of MnCSI succinctly captures the tenet variables of disconfirmation models: desire and expectation disconfirmations. This is more stable than simply looking at the responses to a single question, and is less affected when a client misunderstands one question. Besides, it is relatively easy to apply as the weight of each response can be determined by the researcher irrespective of which context it is used. Furthermore, it is relatively flexible and suitable for any reasonable number of responses deemed appropriate by the researcher.

2.6 Disconfirmation Models

Disconfirmation models are models that suggest that client satisfaction/dissatisfaction is the disparity that exist between the performance of a product/service and some cognitive or emotional standards of the consumer. Oliver (1980) was the first to propose and developed the expectancy disconfirmation theory. This theory has been tested and confirmed in several studies (Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988; Satari, 2007).According to expectation disconfirmation theory, clients after consuming a product/service; compare their perception of product/service performance against their expectations before the service encounter. When outcome or perceived performance is equal to expectations, confirmation occurs. Negative disconfirmation occurs when perceived performance of product/service is less than expected. Positive disconfirmation occurs when product/service performance is better than expected. Client satisfaction occurs by confirmation or positive disconfirmation of consumer expectations, and dissatisfaction is caused by negative disconfirmation of consumer expectations.

Within the disconfirmation school of thought, more recent researches opine that 'desire' instead of 'expectation' in comparison with perceived performance should be used in determining client satisfaction (Suh et al. 1994 & Spreng et al.1996 in Satari 2007). Expectation disconfirmation model has been challenged as unsuitable since an expectation of a service can be rated as better than expected though it might not necessarily meet consumers desired set of services. Therefore desire disconfirmation has been suggested as a better substitute (ibid).Desire and expectations are both cognitive standards and it is not clear which one provides a better explanation of client satisfaction. Khalifa and Liu (2002) proposed, in an empirically justified study, a contingency theory that incorporates both expectation and desire disconfirmations. They conclude that both desire and expectation simultaneously affect overall satisfaction (OCS) significantly. This implies that desire could be used in addition to expectation and not instead of it.

Present study combines desire and expectations disconfirmation simultaneously to measure client satisfaction. Thus, multiple measures will be used to measure CS for a more valid assessment and analysis.

2.7 Client Satisfaction Measurement Scales

According to Danaher and Haddrell (1996), there are three broad categories of measurement scales used in client satisfaction measurement. They are performance scales, disconfirmation scales and satisfaction scales. Performance scales are those that use scales such as poor, fair, good and excellent; disconfirmation scales are those that use scales such as worse than expected to better than expected; and satisfaction scales are those that use scales such as very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

In an empirical study that compared several scales simultaneously on the same respondents, Danaher and Haddrell (1996) confirm that their results agree with the assertions by Devlin et al. (1993) and Rust et al. (1994) that the disconfirmation scale is a preferred method in measuring client satisfaction. For the above reasons, in this study, our theoretical framework for measuring client satisfaction with service quality uses disconfirmation scales.

3.1 Operationalization of Concepts

In this thesis the problem of the study is: Are clients satisfied with the service delivery of NGOs in Assam? The study seeks to assess and analyse beneficiary satisfaction with service delivery of NGOs in Assam.

3. 2 Measuring Client Satisfaction

According to the literature review, client satisfaction can be measured and analyzed using satisfaction indices, Database methods, Disconfirmation Models, Overall Performance and overall satisfaction measures. We have chosen three client satisfaction measures, one index, MnCSI, in addition to disconfirmation models and overall satisfaction measures. We will choose multiple measures not only because they are all empirically validated, but also because we want to have a more reliable results and conclusions as we compare results of four tools that are able to measure the same thing.

3. 2.1 Minnesota Client Satisfaction Index (MnCSI)

MnCSI has been used to measure overall client satisfaction with service delivery. We choose the MnCSI for three reasons. First of all, it is because it combines responses to three questions that ask about the same idea--total satisfaction. Interestingly the model of MnCSI succinctly captures desire and expectation disconfirmations as well as overall satisfaction variables in a single index. This is more stable than simply looking at the responses to a single question, and is less affected when a customer misunderstands one question. Besides, it is relatively easy to apply as the weight of each response can be determined by the researcher irrespective of which industrial context it is used. Furthermore, it is relatively flexible and suitable for any reasonable number of responses deemed appropriate by the researcher.

3. 2.2 Disconfirmation models

Within the Disconfirmation school, it has been empirically established in the literature that expectation disconfirmation should be used in addition to and not instead of desire disconfirmation in explaining or analyzing client satisfaction (Khalifa and Liu, 2002). So, satisfaction has been measured using both desire and expectation disconfirmations scales.

3.2.3 Overall satisfaction

Client satisfaction can be measured using overall satisfaction measures. Overall satisfaction refers to the clients' overall evaluation of the services quality delivered by an organization. The indicators of this measure is one question that ask clients to rate their overall satisfaction of the service received.

4. Measuring Satisfaction with Service Quality

In measuring beneficiary satisfaction with service quality, four measures were used that are all supported by theory.

These are Minnesota Client Satisfaction Index (MnCSI), desire and expectation disconfirmations, and overall satisfaction. Categorically, beneficiary satisfaction was measured with respect to NGO led services.

4. 1 Results of Minnesota Client Satisfaction Index (MnCSI)

MnCSI were used to arrive at a satisfaction index for each and all studied NGOs together. The results are presented in Table 4. 1.

NGO	**MnCSI**	**Interpretation**
SSA	44.3	Low
NEADS	56.6	Fair
DBC	58.1	Fair
BRO	53.7	Fair
Irrespective of NGOs	48.3	Low

Table 4.1 Summary of MnCSI for total sample and within groups

Table 4.1 indicates that the calculated MnCSI for SSA, NEADS, DBC and BRO were 44.3, 56.6, 58.1 and 53.7 respectively. The MnCSI indicated a fair index for NEADS, DBC, BRO and a low index for SSA. The index for the entire sampled population irrespective of NGOs is 48.3 which are low.

4.2 Results of disconfirmation measures and overall beneficiary satisfaction measure

Beneficiaries' were asked to rate their satisfaction with service quality using desire disconfirmation (DD), expectation Disconfirmation (ED) measures and overall client satisfaction (OCS) measures.

4.2. 1 Irrespective of NGOs

The following (Table 4.2.1) shows a descriptive statistics of the three measures: ED, DD and OCS.

		Mean	**Std. Dev.**	**Variance**
	Statistic	**Std. Error**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**
DD	2.7150	.02930	.89688	.804
ED	2.8431	.02997	.91750	.842
OCS	3.2433	.03451	1.05638	1.116

Table 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction Measures

Table 4.2.1 indicates that the mean rating of beneficiary satisfaction using DD measure is 2.7150 with standard deviation of .89688 while using ED measure, the mean is2.8431 with standard deviation of 0.91750. Using OCS, the mean rating was 3.2433 with standard deviation of 1.05638, being the highest. This means that the mean rating of beneficiaries' using (ED and DD) were all below their desire cut of point of three 3, and mean rating using OCS was also below the expected cut off value of four (4), with a wider deviation than the other DD and ED measures.

5. Discussion

5. 1 Overall Client Satisfaction for NGO led Services in Assam

First, the MnCSI (Table 4.1) indicated an index of 48.3 which could be described as low because it is below the satisfactory index of 50. This result indicates that generally CS in NGO sector of Assam is considerably low.

5. 2 With respect to studied NGOs

First of all, the MnCSI (Table 4.2.1) indicates an index of 44.3, 56.6, 58.1 and 53.7 for SSA, NEADS, DBC and BRO respectively. This implies that Client Satisfaction with service quality is considerably low for SSA, but is fair for NEADS, DBC and BRO.

6 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

In this study the purpose was to measure client satisfaction with service quality delivered by NGOs in Assam using four measures: MnCSI, desire and expectation disconfirmation measures, and overall satisfaction measures.

Out of the one thousand sample population, nine hundred and thirty-seven (937) responded to the questionnaire administered. Based on an analysis of data and discussion of results and findings, the following are the summary of major findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Irrespective of the services provided by the studied NGOs in Assam, all the four tools or measures pointed that Client Satisfaction is low and not equal to or better than desired or expectation, so the clients are not satisfied with service quality delivered by NGOs in Assam.

2. With respect to service delivery, the beneficiaries are not satisfied with the service delivery of Shanti Sadhana Ashram. Beneficiary satisfaction for service quality of North East Affected Area development Society (NEADS) is better than expected and at least equal to desire of beneficiaries. For Deshabandhu Club, beneficiary satisfaction is at least equal to expectation and desire of the beneficiaries. Finally for Bosco Reach Out (BRO), beneficiary satisfaction is at least equal to the desire and expectation of the beneficiaries.

3. Overall beneficiary satisfaction is significantly different among the NGOs in Assam.

The final conclusion of this study is that generally clients are not satisfied with service quality delivered by NGOs in Assam or that their satisfaction is considerably low, but beneficiary satisfaction is not same for all the NGOs. Study has found that services as delivered by NGOs are equal to their desired level, not more than that. But it has to be mentioned that services provided by some NGOs are better than their counterparts.

APPENDIX I

FREQUENCIES OF RATING FOR DISCONFIRMATION MEASURES AND OVERALL SATISFACTION MEASURES IRRESPECTIVE OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY NGOs

Desire Disconfirmation

		Frequency	%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much worse than desired	71	7.6	7.6	7.6
	Worse than desired	295	31.5	31.5	39.1
	Equal to desire	441	47.1	47.1	86.1
	Better than desired	90	9.6	9.6	95.7
	Much better than desired	40	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	937	100.0	100.0	

Expectation disconfirmation

		Frequency	%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much worse than expected	47	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Worse than expected	285	30.4	30.4	35.4
	Equal to expectation	426	45.5	45.5	80.9
	Better than expected	126	13.4	13.4	94.3
	Much better than expected	53	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	937	100.0	100.0	

Overall Beneficiary Satisfaction

		Frequency	%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very dissatisfied	67	7.2	7.2	7.2
	dissatisfied	174	18.6	18.6	25.7
	neither	221	23.6	23.6	49.3
	satisfied	414	44.2	44.2	93.5
	very satisfied	61	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	937	100.0	100.0	

APPENDIX- II

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SATISFACTION RATINGS FOR EACH NGOs STUDIED

Report: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

NGO		Desire Disconfirmation	Expectation disconfirmation	Overall Customer Satisfaction
SSA	Mean	2.5824	2.6938	3.0466
	N	601	601	601
	Std. Deviation	.86427	.87337	1.05095
	Std. Error of Mean	.03525	.03563	.04287
	Variance	.747	.763	1.104
	Sum	1552.00	1619.00	1831.00
	% of Total Sum	61.0%	60.8%	60.3%
NEADS	Mean	2.9429	3.2000	3.6571
	N	140	140	140
	Std. Deviation	.94276	.93839	.98017
	Std. Error of Mean	.07968	.07931	.08284
	Variance	.889	.881	.961
	Sum	412.00	448.00	512.00
	% of Total Sum	16.2%	16.8%	16.8%
DBC	Mean	3.1000	3.3000	3.5750
	N	40	40	40
	Std. Deviation	1.03280	1.22370	.98417
	Std. Error of Mean	.16330	.19348	.15561
	Variance	1.067	1.497	.969
	Sum	124.00	132.00	143.00
	% of Total Sum	4.9%	5.0%	4.7%
BRO	Mean	2.9231	2.9808	3.5449
	N	156	156	156
	Std. Deviation	.83888	.83063	.96616
	Std. Error of Mean	.06716	.06650	.07735
	Variance	.704	.690	.933
	Sum	456.00	465.00	553.00
	% of Total Sum	17.9%	17.5%	18.2%
Total	Mean	2.7150	2.8431	3.2433
	N	937	937	937
	Std. Deviation	.89688	.91750	1.05638
	Std. Error of Mean	.02930	.02997	.03451
	Variance	.804	.842	1.116
	Sum	2544.00	2664.00	3039.00
	% of Total Sum	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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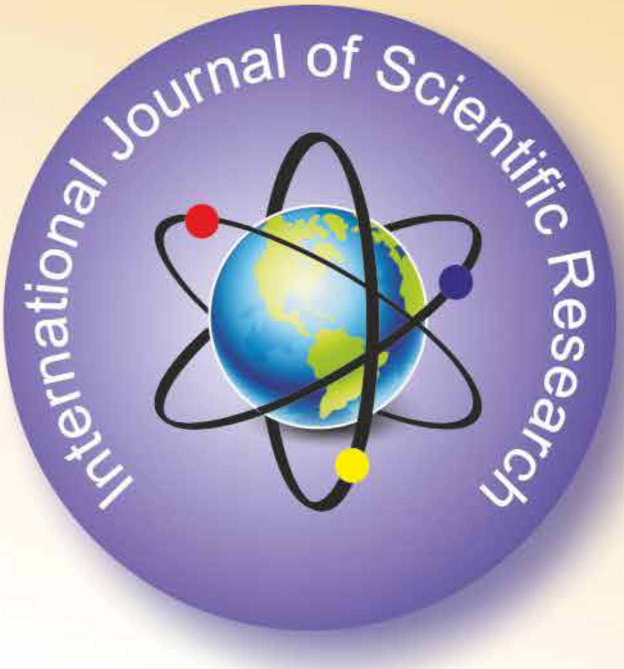
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