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## Employees' Maturity, Job Involvement and Service Quality (SQ)

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Today, improving the quality of service is of particular importance. And since public institutions are paying more to provide services, it is doubly important in the public sector. So factors that improve the quality of services are employee's maturity and their Job involvement. **Objective:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between employees' maturity and their job involvement with providing service quality in executive departments in Kerman-Iran. **Results:** Findings indicate that the maturity of employees and their job involvement is positively associated with the level of service quality. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that the maturity of employees and their job involvement is an important factor for improving the quality of services provided by employees. Therefore, the managers are proposed to enhance the employees' maturity and their job involvement in order to improve the service quality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Providing services for customers is the oldest and yet the most recent issue for each organization. For most organizations, the surest way to survive and to succeed is that people always remind its service quality. The idea is simple but powerful and attractive (Hopson, 2005). Service quality is considered as a management philosophy that using continuous improving approaches and focusing on customer satisfaction tries to optimize the use of available opportunities and resources in order to enhance the quality. In general, it can be said that SQ is a philosophy based on which the management attempts to achieve the quality in a new concept (Razani, 2003).

For SQ in public sector, the main issue is lack of competition and intangible services. For two following reasons, the public sector must act in a non-competitive environment: 1. the activities of the public sector are in areas that private sector is not willing or permitted to invest due to the nature of these areas and because of requiring large financial resources and involving high risks or being strategic; 2. the public sector must not compete the private sector, but it should make policies so that the private sector promotes and let the public sector be able to focus on more important tasks at macro levels (Riahi, 2002).

There are weaknesses within the public sector in Iran that have made the quality of public services unsatisfactory and citizens are not satisfied. Garvin believes that the main issue for the quality of services in the public sector is the absence of competitors and intangible services (Alvani and Riahi, 2003). Due to these problems, managers must focus factors that improve or reduce the service quality. Among the positive factors that improve the service quality and increase the effectiveness of the organization is the maturity of employees and their job involvement.

In environment- situation theory, maturity in an individual or group is defined as the ability to manage and to create attainable goals, motivation for success, willingness and ability to accept responsibility, training or experience (Mirkamali, 2004). Certainly, with increasing the age and needing a job, the knowledge about the job is also increased and people can better understand the motivation both in the life and in the career path. As a person reaches the intellectual maturity, the professional maturity is also formed. Features of professional maturity include responsibility, willingness to choose, information collection, planning the activities, and using all available resources (Rousta, 2008). Rezaei (2002) argues that employees' maturity causes improvements in the current potentials of the organization, needs for change, a shared language and vision, promotion of excellent organizational culture, and finally leads to changes and improvements in the organization. Sabramoni *et al* (2004), in his study on the international organizations in India, came to the conclusion that there is a relationship between the maturity of team members and SQ.

On the other hand, high job involvement is a desirable feature and people with high job involvement are satisfied with their jobs, have a positive attitude toward their tasks, and have a high commitment to the organization and their partners (Carson 1995). Such a people hardly think about quitting the job and they are

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expected to work for the organization for many years. Involving employees in different organizations has different concepts. However, if today employees are generally supposed to be successful, there are several concepts for employees' involvement that seem to be accepted by everyone (Jazani, 2009). Sothard (2010) found that the job involvement of employees in the organization improves SQ. According to studies, employees with high level of maturity are more involved in their jobs. In this context, Houle (2012) argued that the maturity of people causes not only the job involvement but also changes in their attitude toward the work environment.

The results of this study is important for organizations since the employees' maturity improves the ability to set and create goals, motivation for success, satisfaction, and willing and ability to accept responsibility, training or experience. Also, job involvement leads to job satisfaction and a sense of growth and progress. Finally, providing the service quality with focusing on customer satisfaction in organizations may improve approaches for optimal use of available resources and opportunities in order to enhance the quality. Nowadays, customer satisfaction is the most important factor involved in the success of an organization. Hence, SQ is important as a factor for the success of organizations.

#### *Research Framework:*

This study investigates SQ as the criterion variable, employees' maturity as a predictor variable, and job involvement as both criterion and predictor variable. Parkinson. (Ebrahimi, 2012) considered employees' maturity with seven following components:

1. Activity: putting no restrictions for employees and utilizing their ability in tasks.
2. Independence: freedom of employees and lack of dependence on their superiors for applying any changes while doing their tasks.
3. Behavior in several ways: providing opportunities in order to let employees paly roles while performing tasks in different ways.
4. Deep interests: synergy of employees while performing their tasks in organization and their interest in the organization's overall performance.
5. Wide perspective: knowledge of employees about long-term goals and contribute in long-term strategies.
6. Superior or equal situation: appropriate behavior of organization with employees in order to create confidence and trust for having a responsible and mature behavior.
7. Self- awareness: providing needed opportunities by the organization to actualize the potentials of workforce.

According to Ladal and Kanjer model, job involvement has three components that can be used to measure the job involvement. These components include (Sharifi, 2009): (a) the importance level of the job; (b) the time spent to complete the job; and (c) the importance level of achievements in the job

Also, according to Garvin, SQ in the public sector has eight components:

1. Informing: information should be fast and accurate and available for everyone.
2. Speed of continuing the service: the public sector customers are asking for speeding up their work.
3. Accuracy of services: the public sector customers want the results of the works to be accurate.
4. Beauty: the appearance of actions, correspondence, publications, facilities and the place must be clean and beautiful.
5. Good behavior: the public sector customers want to receive services with a fair behavior.
6. Law abiding Employees: the public sector customers are willing the employees to be committed to terms and laws and feel uncomfortable about discrimination and inequality.
7. Simplicity: the public sector customers desire a simple procedure for works and not sophisticated workflow.
8. Flexibility: the public sector customers want flexibility in implementation of rules and regulations (Alvani and Riahi, 2002)

Few studies have been conducted on the relationship between the maturity of employees and the quality of services; however, Vestkat (2006) believes that the maturity of employees, with the concept of the person's ability and willing to accept the task, is related to involvement job. Houle (2012) found that people maturity not only leads to the job involvement but also changes their attitude toward the job.

Considering the above discussion, the research hypotheses are developed as follows:

1. There is a relationship between the maturity of employees and SQ in executive departments in Kerman.
2. There is a relationship between the job involvement of employees and SQ in executive departments in Kerman.
3. There is a relationship between the maturity of employees and their job involvement in executive departments in Kerman.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study used correlation method, and based on the objective, it is an applied research. The population included all executive staff in Kerman which is 23,083 employees in 66 executive agencies. Using Cochran

formula, the sample size was calculated equal to 378. Then the stratified random sampling method proportional to the population size was used. In this study, in order to collect the required data, three questionnaires were used:

The employees' maturity questionnaire by Hashemi (2008) included 26 questions and 7 components. The job involvement questionnaire had 20 questions and three components. The service quality questionnaire contained 26 questions and 8 components. To evaluate the status of each of these components, the five-point Likert scale with options including strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree, and strongly disagree was used. The validity and reliability were 0.857 and 0.761 for employees' maturity questionnaire, 0.94 and 0.944 for job involvement questionnaire, and 0.857 and 0.937 for service quality questionnaire. To test the research hypothesis, this study used Durbin-Watson, Pearson and Spearman tests along with the scatter plot to determine the relationship between two variables, the coefficient of determination, and multi-variable regression.

#### Results:

The results confirm all assumptions considered in this study. The results of the main hypothesis are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Statistics of correlation tests for the relationship between the variables

Providing SQ								
Determination coefficient	Relationship type	Is there any Relationship?	Spearman			Pearson		
			Number	Significance	Correlation coefficient	Number	Significance	Correlation coefficient
0.019	Direct	Yes	378	0.005	0.144	378	0.007	0.138
Providing SQ								
Determination coefficient	Relationship type	Is there any Relationship?	Spearman			Pearson		
			Number	Significance	Correlation coefficient	Number	Significance	Correlation coefficient
0.023	Direct	Yes	378	0.000	0.212	378	0.003	0.151
Job Involvement								
Determination coefficient	Relationship type	Is there any Relationship?	Spearman			Pearson		
			Number	Significance	Correlation coefficient	Number	Significance	Correlation coefficient
0.066	Direct	Yes	378	0.000	0.307	378	0.000	0.257

The results of sub- hypotheses show that there is a significant relationship between both the activity and awareness of employees with offering SQ, but there is no significant relationship between superior or equal status of employees and the level of their interests with offering the services quality. The results obtained by other sub- hypotheses show that there is a significant relationship between the significant level of the job and the time spent for the job with SQ, but there is no significant relationship between the importance level of job achievements and offering the services quality. Finally, the results show that there is significant relationship between the maturity of employees and all other components of job involvement.

Results obtained by regression show that employees, maturity and job involvement have the greatest impact on SQ, respectively (Table 2).

#### Discussion and Conclusion:

Since so far few empirical studies have been conducted on the relationship employees' maturity and job involvement with offering SQ, merely the ideas of experts are stated as follows:

These findings suggest that there is a relationship between employees' maturity and service quality. The maturity is defined as the ability to manage and to create attainable goals, motivation for success, willingness and ability to accept responsibility, training or experience (Mirkamali, 2004). These conditions can affect the

offer of the desired quality of service. Sabramoni *et al.* (2004), in his study on the international organizations in India, came to the conclusion that there is a relationship between the maturity of team members and SQ. That is, as the maturity of employee's increases, the quality of service improves. Therefore, it is expected as the maturity increases, employees provide better service quality.

**Table 2:** Regression coefficients for Model 1 (employees' maturity and job involvement)

Model 1	P-valu (significance level)	T-Statistic	Standardized Coefficients	Non-standardized Coefficients	
	Beta	Std. Error			B
5.574		0.343	Constant value	0.0	1.91
2.016	0.106	0.097	Employees' Maturity	0.044	0.195
2.365	0.124	0.055	Job Involvement	0.019	0.13

These findings suggest that there is a relationship between service quality and job involvement of employees.

High job involvement indicates experiencing the sense of significant, enthusiasm, and pride, being overwhelmed in job, and having a good feeling about the job.

In this case, as the time passes, people will feel attachment to their job (Shafeli *et al.*, 2008). These conditions can be effective in improving the quality of services. In this context, Southart (2010) found that the job involvement of employees will improve the service quality in organizations. Therefore, it is expected that as the employees' job involvement increases, they provide better service quality.

According to the above discussion, it can be argued that such people have a high job involvement. In this context, Houle (2012) found that the maturity of people not only leads to the job involvement, but also changes their attitude to the work environment. Therefore, it is expected as the maturity increases, the level of job involvement also increases.

The findings show that there is an inverse relationship between the independence of employees and SQ. The autonomy or independence means freedom of employees and lack of dependence on their superiors for applying any changes while doing their tasks (Hashemi, 46:2008). Although the nature of this variable is positive but sometimes it can also have a negative meaning. In other words, it can make a positive or negative sense in the mind (Steel *et al.*, 2001). Sometimes the perceptions of employees are based on this idea that for being successful, they need to rely on others and cannot act independently.

On the other hand, in SQ discussion, the employees' participation must be emphasized. In other words, to succeed in SQ, one of the most important preconditions is the existence of collaboration between employees in achieving goals. If the employees do not actively participate in tasks, they may face difficulties while providing SQ. This argument may be based on the obtained results. It means as the dependency of employees on other people decreases while performing the task, the act poorer in providing SQ.

The findings show that there is a relationship between SQ level and employees' activity. Since activity means lack of putting constraints for employees and using all their potential in tasks (Hashemi, 2008), in all discussions on SQ, the emphasis is on using all abilities and potentials of employees. In this context, we can refer to Parasuraman model that introduces the ability to provide services and the ability and knowledge of employees in attracting the trust of customers as a requirement of success (Riahi, 2005). Bagozzi (1992) believes that employees' activity in work environment leads to expected outcomes (Yee *et al.*, 2008). If the purpose of an organization is to provide desirable SQ, the employees' activity is an appropriate predictor.

The findings show that there is no relationship between multiple behaviors of employees and SQ. Multiple behaviors in nature emphasizes on providing opportunities to let individuals play roles in tasks using different ways (Hashemi, 2008, stated in Ebrahimi 2012). While in SQ discussions, the focus is on appropriate behavior, i.e. a behavior that has already been defined by the organization, in the workplace (Riahi and Alvani, 2003). In other words, to be successful in providing SQ for customers, it is essential for the employees to be trained by the proper behavior pre-defined by the organized and to act accordingly. Although this behavior could constantly be changing due to the conditions, it is confirmed by the organization. Therefore, in this area, employee does not need to have any arbitrary behavior and freedom.

The findings indicate that there is no relationship between the equal or superior status of employees and SQ. Equal or superior status means the behavior of the organization in order to ensure employees to behave in a responsible manner (Hashemi, 46:2008, listed on the Abrahamic 2012). The organization expects to encourage employees toward greater responsibility by building confidence and trusting in their abilities. Although it was expected to be a relationship between equal or superior quality of employees and SQ, sometimes it can be argued that the cultural conditions in the community, the bureaucratic structure of the organization, the perception and attitude of employee toward the full support from the supervisor and etc. may affect the result. Thus, some factors, more significant than this variable, can be involved in the success of SQ.

The findings show that there is a relationship between the view extents of employees and the level of SQ. Employees' awareness about long-term goals and cooperation in the long-term strategy is considered as the view extents of employees (Hashemi 46:2008, stated in Ebrahimi 2012). On the other hand, during providing

SQ, providers play an important role in achieving high performance with low cost, especially to in achieving strategic goals (Lilrank & Cano, translated by T. Ansari, 2005). These objectives will be achieved if the employees have an extended vision. In this context, Hays and Hill (2000) found that there is a significant relationship between the extent of employees' vision and their perception about providing SQ.

The findings show that there is no relationship between the level of employees' interest and SQ. The synergy of employees in performing the tasks and their interests to the overall performance of the organization represent the interest level of employees (Hashemi, 2008). However, this variable has a positive meaning, the findings show no relationship.

Hence, it can be argued that there may be some intervention variables such as the bureaucratic structures, the cultural conditions of the community, perceptions and attitudes of employees, disproportion of workers with the job, etc. affecting the result. On the other hand, is SQ discussions, the interests of employees is not referred as a factor for success.

The findings show that there is a relationship between the self-awareness of employees and SQ level. Awareness means having an accurate knowledge about the self; in other words, having knowledge about attitudes, opinions, ideas, thoughts, emotions, abilities, skills, and shortcomings (Azarnewshan, 2007). A successful person is a person with high self-awareness. In this context, we can refer to Gelenbe (2009). He confirms the relationship between self-awareness and SQ.

The findings show that there is no relationship between the job importance and providing SQ. The efficacy that a job has for other people or organizations indicates the job importance of the employees (Seyed Javadein, 2008, stated in Motahari, 2012). In other words, the job importance depends on the efficacy level of the job on jobs or lives of others inside or outside the organization environment (Morhead and Griffin, 2002).

The findings show that the amount of time spent for the tasks and the quality of service are related. This time for human can be defined as the heart-satisfaction and adherence to tasks, with the proviso that with no monitoring system, a person will best complete its tasks at a given time. One of the issues raised in this context is the term "conscience work" which is the innate sense of commitment to comply with requirements that have been agreed for the task. In other words, conscience work means the heart-satisfaction, commitment, and adherence to tasks that a person should do so that if there is no inspector and supervisor, he will do the job perfectly (Abili, 2012). On the other hand, in terms of SQ, the time required to do the service is deterministic for the quality of the service. The time dimension includes determining the time, waiting time, and service time (Riahi and Alvani, 2004). Since one aspect in SQ is the time, then the relationship between two variables is confirmed.

The findings show that there is no relationship between the importance of job success and the level of provided SQ. Career success is achieved when a person can utilize all his abilities and opportunities to fulfill his career goals (Motahari, 2012). If fulfilling these goals is personally and organizationally required, career success will be important. Although a relationship between these two variables was expected, but the findings show no relationship. Hence, it can be argued that it is possible that some intervention variables such as bureaucratic structures, cultural conditions of the community, perceptions and attitudes of employees, disproportion of workers with jobs, etc. affect the result. Thus, some factors, more important than this variable, can be involved in the success of SQ.

The findings show that the maturity of workers and the importance of jobs are related. Adults can usually best use their resources to achieve their goals and objectives (Shafiabadi, 1999). If organizational purposes are important for such a person, it can be expected that job is important for such a person. On the other hand, since the importance of job depends on the impact it has on jobs or lives of the other inside or outside the organization (Morhead and Griffin, 2002), it can be argued that the employees who consider this have high maturity.

The findings show that the employees' maturity and the time is spent to do the tasks are related. The organization, at every stage of its growth, reacts positively to certain types of improvement tools, and it depends on the development, maturity and behavior of the organization which in fact is that the maturity of human resources. It is not possible to apply improvement tools such as the cooperative system in organizations with employees at an elementary level of maturity (Wilensky, 2006, stated in Ebrahimi, 2012), and such people cannot spend enough time to accomplish their works. However, one of the characteristics of adults is activity. The person having this characteristic during doing his work will certainly spend enough time to reach a satisfactory outcome.

The findings demonstrate there is a relationship between the employees, maturity and the importance of career success. Since maturity means having the ability to establish and create attainable goals, motivation for success, interest, and ability to accept responsibility, training and experience in an individual or group (Mirkamali, 2001), these features can affect the importance of career success. Also, organizational maturity means accepting (assigned or elective) responsibility and having practical commitment to accepted responsibility (Zare, N., 2001), and the acceptance of responsibility and commitment may lead the career success to be important for the person.

Finally, it is recommended that by holding training courses in SQ, managers help employees in providing SQ and learn them the customer is right. Managers can reward behaviors that promote the SQ and punish unprincipled behaviors. An area in which managers have authority in organizations is the authority to reward and punish employees. Managers can reward employees to encourage them to the work quality.

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