KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AS AN ENABLERS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE QUALITY

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Abstract - The purpose of this research paper is to explore the impact of knowledge management processes on the customer service quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector. Moreover, the research paper also introduces an insight into the importance of knowledge management processes in achieving better services level. A purposive sample was used according to the nature of variable items. A developed questionnaire was used to collect data, a total of (189) questionnaires valid for analysis purposes. The findings of this research indicate that is a significant impact of knowledge management processes ((Knowledge discovery, knowledge capture, and knowledge sharing and knowledge application) on the service quality in the researched companies and the knowledge discovery is the most important process that can increase the quality of customer service. The research concluded business firms should concentrate on knowledge management processes as a strategy to differentiate itself from others.

Keywords - Knowledge management processes, Customer Service Quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Customer service quality isthe ultimate goal for all business firms in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in the turbulent business environment. The dynamic of the business environment and increasing the bargaining power of customers force business firms to adopt innovative strategies to build a strong relationship with customers through providing better services than competitors (Ryding, 2010). Knowledge Management processes have been considered as an essential initiative for managing customer knowledge more successfully to provide the value of servicing customers (Lee & Choi, 2003). Therefore, the aim of the study is to investigate the potential role of knowledge management processes on the quality of customer services. The importance of the study stems from the importance of knowledge management processes in maximizing the service level which provided to the customers in a rapidly turbulent customer –based knowledge in the market place. Moreover, this study tries to assist the management in Jordan's telecommunications sector to take into account the significance of knowledge management in order to improve the quality of customer services. Finally, the knowledge management topic still an important issue about how to activate knowledge management processes in developing countries including Jordanian companies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Knowledge Management Processes

Nowadays, customer knowledge is considered an essential asset for sustainable competitive advantage and creating business value to business firms. With theknowledge-based economy, successful knowledge management processes can assist business firms to improve the market share and enhance the overall performance through effective discovery, capturing, sharing and application of knowledge (Fong and Wong, 2005, Becerra-Fernandez, I., Gonzalez, A., &Sabherwal, R. 2004). Knowledge management is anapproach that drives business to maximize the utilization of the knowledge assets including explicit knowledge that resides in documents and data repositories and tacit knowledge that embedded in employees' and customers' minds (Li and Gao, 2003).According to Davenport, and Prusak(1998).Knowledge management refersto the process of gathering and distribution of knowledge and the efficient utilization of knowledge assets. In addition Becerra-Fernandez, I., Gonzalez, A., &Sabherwal, R. (2004) describes knowledge management as a process of knowledge discovery, capturing, sharing and application.Knowledge discovery refers to development of new explicit knowledge and new tacit knowledge using the prior knowledge or from available data and information, the development of new explicit knowledge relies on sub-process called combination whereas the development of new tacit knowledge through socialization sub-process. Knowledge captureis described as the process of retrieving the explicit knowledge that resides in data repositories and retrieving the tacit knowledge that embedded in people' minds, internalization sub-processes supports capturing explicit knowledge and externalization sub-processes supports the tacit one (Nonaka ,1994). Knowledge sharing defined as the process of communicated explicit knowledge that supported by exchange subprocess and communicated tacit knowledge through socialization subprocess(Alavi and Leidner2001). Finally, the process of knowledge application of explicit knowledge supported through routine sub-process whereby the process of knowledge application of tacit knowledge supported through direction sub-process which some people use

knowledge possessed by other people without actually capturing and learning it. (Grant 1996).

2.2 Customer Service Quality:

Now today's turbulent business competitive environment considered driving forces for the business firms to deliver a high quality of services provided to customers due to the customer service become the key factor for survival in the marketplace and to sustain the competitive advantage (Grönroos2007). Customer service has a positive role to maximize the business firm's profitability and a huge effect on the overall performance of firms. Therefore, the differentiation in providing the high quality of customer service and understanding customer demands over time has become essential issues in order to gain high market share (Parasuraman, et.al. 1985). The quality of service described as a measure of service level provided to meet or exceed the expectations of customers through delivering a better customer service than they expect (Lewis and Booms ,1983 (Zeithaml&Bitner, 2000). Gronroos (1994) stated three dimensions of Service quality include the first one is Function quality, which refers to the service delivery method, the second one the dimension of technical quality which means what the customers are receiving from the delivery of services and the third dimension Corporate image of quality which means how customers perceive the business firm. Based on Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Zeithaml and Bitner, (1996), service quality is the attitude about the services and in general as an antecedent of satisfaction of customers. The SERVQUAL considered the most widely model to measure the quality of services by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1986, 1988) includes the fowling dimensions: (1) Tangible dimension reflects equipment,physical facility, and personnel appearance, (2) Responsiveness reflects providing the prompt service and helping the customers, (3) Reliability, refers to provide the promised service accurately, (4) Empathy which means knowing the customer and interactive communication, (5) Assurance reflect the security ,credibility ,courtesy ,and competence (van Iwaarden et al., 2003).

III. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

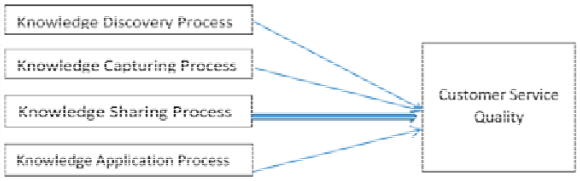


Figure (1). Conceptual Model (Based On Previous Studies in Literature)

Based on the previous literature, the conceptual model was drawn to explore the impact of Knowledge management processes on Customer Service Quality.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey research can be considered as a descriptive approach in nature using a five -point Likert scale questionnaire includes of (12) questions to measure the independent variable (Knowledge Management Processes) based on the previous studies Becerra-Fernandez, I., Gonzalez, A., &Sabherwal, R. (2004) and (22) questions to measure the dependent variable (Service quality) based on Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1986, 1988). The population of this research consists of all employees ofJordan's telecommunications sector (Zain, OrangeandUmniahCompany) and the researched companies' customers.A purposive sample was used according to the nature of variable items, the employees' responsesvalid was (56) questionnaires from (60) questionnaires were distributed and (133) questionnaires related to customers responses valid for analysis from (140) questionnaires, a total of (189) questionnaires valid for analysis purposes. Therefore for analyzing data (SPSS 18) software was used includes descriptive analysis and regression. In order to achieve the questionnaire validity, a number of professors recommended some comments that make enhancements in the questionnaire content. For achieving the reliability of this research a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of Knowledge management processeswas 0.83, foritems related to Customer service quality Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.87 The Cronbach's Alpha reliability shows high reliability as shown in the table (1).

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge management processes	12	0.83
Customer Service Quality	22	0.87

Table (1): Reliability Statistics

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1H01: There is no statistically significant impact of the Knowledge Discovery process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector.

Table (2) indicate, there is a significant impact of theKnowledge Discovery process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector. This means the (0.674) of Customer Service Quality as a result of changeability of Knowledge Discovery process and F value was (67.385) and it's significant at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

	Customer Service Quality				
Knowledge Discovery Process	(R)	(R) Square	F	b	Sig
	0.853	0.674	67.385	0.865	0.000

Table (2): Regression Analysis Test Results

5.2 H02: There is no statistically significant impact of the Knowledge Capturing process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector

The results in the Table (3) provide the evidence, there is a significant impact of the Knowledge Capturing process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector. Thisresult indicates the (0.457) of Customer Service Quality resulting from the changeability of Knowledge Capturing process. Whereas F value was (69.385) and it's significant at level (α≤ 0.05).

	Customer Service Quality				
Knowledge CapturingProcess	(R)	(R) Square	F	b	Sig
	0.657	0.457	69.385	0.821	0.000

Table (3): Regression Analysis Test Results

5.3 H03: There is no statistically significant impact of the Knowledge Sharing process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector

Based on Table (4) shows, there is a significant impact of the Knowledge Sharing process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector. This indicates the (0.455) of Customer Service Quality resulting from the changeability of Knowledge Sharing process. As F value was (67.228) and it's significant at level (α≤ 0.05).

	Customer Service Quality				
Knowledge Sharing Process	(R)	(R) Square	F	b	Sig
	0.701	0.455	67.228	0.791	0.000

Table (4): Regression Analysis Test Results

5.4 H04: There is no statistically significant impact of the Knowledge Application process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector

	Customer Service Quality				
Knowledge Application Process	(R)	(R) Square	F	b	Sig
	0.669	0.398	58.354	0.684	0.000

Table (5): Regression Analysis Test Results

Based on Table (5) shows, there is a significant impact of the Knowledge application process on Customer Service Quality in Jordan's telecommunications sector. This indicates the (0.398) of Customer Service Quality resulting from the changeability Knowledge Sharing process. As F value was (58.354) and it's significant at level (α≤ 0.05).

VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research paper was to investigate the impact of knowledge management processes upon the quality of customer service delivered by Jordanian telecommunications sector. The research findings showed that there is a significant impact of knowledge management processes (Knowledge discovery, knowledge capture, and knowledge sharing and knowledge application) on the service quality in the researched companies and the knowledge discovery is the most importantprocess that can increase the quality of customer service. Therefore, Jordanian telecommunications sector can benefit from the importance of knowledge management processes to enhance the quality of customer service and adopting new ways or technologies to understand and meet the changing needs of customers in the turbulent environment. Jordanian telecommunication companies need to optimize their knowledge about providing better service quality to be as a leader in the telecommunication industry.Hence in order to build a tight relationship with customers and providing superior services, business firms should concentrate on knowledge management processes as a strategy to differentiate itself from others.

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