

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT ISS FACILITY SERVICE COMPANY (CLEANING SERVICE)

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Bachelor's Thesis
May 2012

Degree Programme in Facility Management
Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services



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Author(s) MALLA, Kalyan	Type of publication Bachelor's Thesis	Date 07.05.2012
	Pages 57	Language English
	Confidential () Until	Permission for web publication (X)
Title SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT ISS FACILTIY SERVICE COMPANY (CLEANING SERVICE)		
Degree Programme Degree Programme in Facility Management		
Tutor(s) LINDROOS, Juha		
Assigned by JYVÄSKYLÄN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU/JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES		
Abstract <p>The first objective of this research was to discover about the quality and current problems of service. Besides that, this thesis also provides some prompt solutions for these problems in a specific service company- this thesis research objective, ISS Service Company. Secondly, by this research the questions about how customer satisfaction is in ISS Service Company and in general will be answered. The research was done for Agora University building where the service provider is ISS. The thesis was carried out using quantitative method. Some questionnaire were set up and sent through the email using the Digium survey method to the user of the services in the building. The research was set to examine the satisfaction level of customer with the service provided by company. Among many customers, only 35 were chosen randomly for the survey. The survey was held in 8.3.2012 which was sent to 35 people. The survey was held for about 2 weeks in order to get as many responses as possible. The survey was conducted by sending the questionnaire using the Digium Marata survey software which was answered by 18 respondents.</p> <p>This study will help the company to improve its service quality for the customer satisfaction. The results achieved from the thesis indicate that the cleaning service provided by ISS Company is good and the customers are satisfied with it. The customers felt that the company is always eager to help their customers at its best.</p>		
Keywords Service Quality, Customer satisfaction, Service and Quality		
Miscellaneous		

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1. Introduction

“Service Quality is the universal concept” (Hunter Taylor). By providing service quality, the company will be able to increase its’ revenue, improved customer service and customer loyalty (Valarie A. Zeithami, A. Parasuraman and Leonard L. Barry, 1990). A long time ago, Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987, 1988) affirmed the relations between customer satisfaction and company profit in their research. Therefore, it is important for any company to concentrate on improving their customer service. The quality of the service is important for both, consumers and service provider Companies. Without a doubt, customers will choose the company which provides them best goods or quality services. Moreover, nowadays the customers are becoming more and more demanding as for the development of service quality as well as the number of service companies. Customers have more choices to buy the services, which is why it is important for every organization to stand solid among other competitors to get the business. Thus, the competitions between the service companies become very tough. Fortunately, “service marketers have experienced it for past few years that competition can be well managed by differentiating through quality”, moreover “the important of service lies customer service management” (Harsh V.Verma and Sheetal B Sachde, 2004). Any company should be able to generate the sufficient sales and retain the customers in order to survive in the competition. The only way is to provide quality service to the customers with a favorable cost.

The ISS Company branch in Jyväskylä is chosen as company research case used in this thesis. It one of the biggest outsourcing service companies in the world with branches in many other countries including Finland (ISS annual report, 2011). Although Jyväskylä is not a big city in Finland, there are many companies providing the same types of service as ISS. To win this competition, besides other business respects, this company should not only meet the requirements about the service quality but also provide better and better service meeting the customer’ needs.

This thesis is aiming for researching about the general standard qualification for service nowadays. This research will find out the current problems in the service and provide them with prompt solutions with a specific research objective. The purpose of the study is also to understand how satisfied the customers are with the service

provided by ISS Company. Customer satisfaction has become one of the biggest issues for the company's success. Nowadays, the company has become more conscious about providing the quality service and also customer relationship. Service quality and customer satisfaction, in fact, have a cycle-system since service quality proportionally affects customers' satisfaction. On the other hand, customer satisfaction indicates service quality. (Williams & Buswell 2003, 69). Having the knowledge of customers' needs and attitude helps companies to improve the services provided and hence leads to customer satisfaction. Companies with accurate information about the customers' needs can know where the changes are needed for better results.

The research takes place in one of the building in Jyvaskyla which is Agora University building and the service provider is ISS. The thesis will be carried out using a quantitative method. A questionnaire will be set up and sent via email using the Digium survey method to the user of the services in the building. The research was set to examine the satisfaction level of customers with the service provided by the company. This kind of research was also done earlier but it should be done quite often as the customer needs and views towards quality are dynamic. The research also shows how the service quality affects customers' satisfaction. Therefore, the research questions were chosen regarding the service quality and also customer satisfaction. The data acquired by the questionnaire will be analyzed using SPSS statistical software for the multiple choice questions whereas open short questions will be analyzed manually.

There are two persons in the building taking care of the cleaning service in the building. The questionnaire will be sent to those persons as well as other teachers and members staffs of the University who are the frequent users of the building.

For this case, 35 people were selected randomly including janitors, teachers and staff members. The surveys are done to find out the level of service quality in the building and to provide better service with results of the survey and suggestion gathered.

1.1. Cleaning Service

Cleaning as the definition from dictionary can be described as the process of getting rid of dirt and pollution (dictionary, which can directly or indirectly harm the health of human as well as performance of facilities). The cleaning refers to the end of all the unwanted materials and maintenance of the certain clean environment. The standard of cleaning in every place is different and the methods for cleaning also depend on the purpose and the places. For instance, cleaning in house or in construction sites is different from doing it in commercial buildings or public places.

Addition with the materials for cleaning, the workers also need some basic skills and knowledge of hygiene to guarantee the safety, healthy and the quality service by which the companies want to satisfy customer. To reach the standard of quality service in this field, employees or the workers are the keys, which cannot be substituted.

In the ISS, cleaning is one of the important parts of service package. The aim of this thesis also specifies how this company implements and satisfies their customers with their cleaning service. Moreover, with the understanding that employees are important, how ISS trains and guarantees their employees transfer all necessary quality service in their job. They also have training session for the employees regarding the safety and cleaning process time to time.

2. Research Methodology of the Thesis

2.1. Research problem

Outsourcing is one of the most growing businesses in modern world which aim is to provide other companies with various services and let them concentrate to their core business rather than worry about other services. As we can see that nowadays, many companies are losing their contracts from the owner in certain interval of time. It is because of existence of many outsourcing companies providing same kind of service

in competitive price. The competitors are providing more qualitative service in the same price with better customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to know the definition of service quality from customer point of view.

The main cause of losing the contract is also lack of quality in service as there are many employees who are lacking skills to do their work efficiently. The rise in technology has developed some kind of devices which measure amount of dust particle remained in the cleaned area. It shows how clean or dirty is the premises which have been cleaned. (E.g. Dust detector and Ultra snap) Therefore, the workers should be trained properly before put into the work. Working with untrained and unskilled employee is quite challenging. However, it does not only bring the disadvantage in the quality of the service but also the dissatisfaction of the customer which could be the reason for losing contract. Therefore, in this case we try to solve the problem relating with service quality and customer satisfaction.

2.2. Research questions

In this research we are discussing the concepts which are concerned with the topic like service quality and customer satisfaction. The objective of this research is to find out how the customers perceive the service they have been provided by the ISS Company. The research also study and understand how satisfied the customers are with the service provided by the ISS Company.

The purpose of the thesis is also to find out the current problems in the service and to provide them with prompt solutions.

The survey was done to find out the answers to the questions as:

- How customers judge the level of the service quality provided by the Company?
- How satisfied the customers are with the service delivered every day?

- What are the most important and urgent problem of the building regarding the services?

2.3. Research objective

The objective of this research is to find out how the customers of the organizations perceive the service they have been provided by ISS Company. The aim of the thesis is also to know if the customers are satisfied with the services provided and it also include the topic of finding out the current problems in the service and to provide them with prompt solutions in order to give out quality service.

By analyzing the survey questions, this research will give the general picture about the service quality that the customers want from the organization and also the improvements that should be done for better customer service.

2.4. Research Method

For this research, quantitative method is chosen. Cohen (1980) defined quantitative research as social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements. He states that an empirical statement is defined as a descriptive statement about what “is” the case in the “real world” rather than what “ought” to be the case. Moreover in 1994 Creswell gave a very concise definition of quantitative research as a type of research that is ‘explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).’

Some questions are designed relating to the topic in this research. With the help of these questionnaires we will get some customer feedback which help us to identify the weaknesses to be corrected and strength to be reinforced. The questionnaires include both open ended and close ended questions. Unlike the qualitative method, the questionnaires are sent to the chosen group of people instead of interviewing them

personally to get their views and ideas about the organization. With this method we get to know the desire and understanding of many people and hence it is easy to evolve the solution.

2.5. Methodology

In this research along with quantitative customer satisfaction within the organization, secondary data is also used. The questions are related with service quality and survey is carefully designed to suit with the research purpose.

For surveying, the research will be conducted among staff members of the Agora University building. The number of the people for the survey is 35 which include janitors, teachers and some other staffs. Among 35 staffs, 2 of them are caretaker of the cleaning service. They are chosen for the survey because they are looking after the cleaning service and know the tasks that should be done by the cleaners. They can be more reliable in terms of survey. Janitors are also important candidates for the survey as they are taking care of the whole building including cleaning service.

Most of the questions are multiple choices with 5 options in each and also it has some open questions where customers can put their own words. The questionnaires are sent by the Marata Digium using their email addresses.

As for the secondary data, we know that there had been the research with same topic before also. Thus, this theory will be based partly on the work of the other authors as the references and guidelines.

3. About ISS

3.1. Background information

ISS is the abbreviated form of International Service System. Nowadays, it is one of the world's leading Facility Services companies providing variety types of services including facilities management, cleaning services, support services, property services, catering services, security services. ISS offers its facility services and leverages knowledge on an international scale for the benefit of the customers. According to the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP), ISS is one of the premier outsourcing companies in the world (ISS web site), assessed on December 29, 2011)

ISS makes other company's non-core activities their main core business. There are 530,000 employees working in the ISS. The ISS Company has branches in over 50 countries across Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America and the Pacific. In 2010, this company global revenue reaches to more than ninety nine million Euros. ISS provides mainly service- intangible product thus, employees are their main resource to create values for company and key success to bring it to this position as today. By integrating with the clients in the organizations, ISS employees create an effective and friendly working environment.

ISS Security Oy offers business in a wide range of cleaning, security solutions and many others that include cleaning of the hospitals, offices, security systems, security guards, a safety net for solutions, and maintenance and alarm monitoring services. In 1934 ISS established its cleaning service with the establishment of Det Danske Rengørings Selskab A/S (The Danish Cleaning Company) as an independent subsidiary of the security company. In the year 2000 it was introduced as facility Service Company. As the report from Copenhagen headquarters, "ISS has bought more than 350 companies in different countries since 1998" (Helsingin Sanomat, 2010)

- ISS performance in the year 2011
- Revenue- 77,644 DKK million

- Total revenue growth- 5%
- Organic revenue growth- 6.2%
- Operating profit before other items- 4,388 DKK million
- Growth in operating profit before other items- 2%
- Operating margin- 5.7%
- Net profit/(loss)- 507 DKK million
- Cash conversion- 93%
- Number of employees- 534500

Source: ISS Annual report 2011

3.2. ISS service types

Services provided by ISS Company are in six fields including local guard, technical guard, hospital safety, shop safety, lobby and reception services and cleaning services.

ISS cleaning service is the focused service analyzed and researched in this paper. ISS runs the largest cleaning business in the world. It looks to specialized areas such as cleaning hospitals and semiconductor assembly facilities for its fastest growth; the group also has a few auxiliary enterprises such as caring for the aged ones. In 1971, ISS acquired service system OY, Finland's largest cleaning and environmental services group. The net sales of ISS service in the year 2007 was totaled 445 million Euros.

3.2.1. ISS with cleaning service

ISS has been doing the cleaning services since more than 70 years and had already set a high cleaning standard in the different countries. The company offer efficient and flexible cleaning solutions to meet the costumers' individual needs and demand. ISS is

specialized in the cleaning solutions to washrooms services, food hygiene, health care, daily office cleaning or industrial cleaning and many more others.



Figure 1. ISS services

Source: ISS main website, “what we do”,

http://www.issworld.com/our_services/cleaning/Pages/cleaning.aspx

Cleaning services is also one of the core competencies, therefore it develops new methods, tools and materials which further improve the quality of cleaning. They provide private and public sector service solutions that enable the costumers to focus on their core business. In order to bring efficiency in cleaning, they developed cleaning excellence which is the combination of tried and tested working methods and tools with effective procurement processes and cost optimization.

3.3. ISS in Finland

ISS branch in Finland is the third largest private employer but the largest service and real estate Company here. There are 13,300 employees with 7000 cleaners working in this ISS Finland. It helps clients to improve the operating environment and business by providing service resolve. Customers’ relations are the highly concentrated. To develop new business models, customers relations’ are taken into consideration and to boost performance ISS Finland branch uses Innovative solutions. By making the process go smooth ways, the customers will save their resources. In multi service

solution, standard and individual services are both offered. For ISS Finland, Business developing depends on “customers and industry experts” (ISS Finland official website)

In 2010, the ISS Services' revenue reached EUR 5 million. According to Matti Kyytsönen, CEO of the Finnish (Helsingin Sanomat, 2010), the business of ISS branch here was in “good shape”. Moreover last year, “the Finnish ISS was recognized as the best subsidiary in the whole concern”.

3.4. ISS Strategy

The ISS Company strategizes their business depending on the demands of the customers. The world today can be different from the world yester or tomorrow. This company’s strategy have been unchanged for decades, which means it has been right, flexible and suitable no matter how unbalanced the world is. The ISS’s strategy is focused on “leveraging” its unique platform by “the alignment of the organization’s excellent global implementation service, based on international best practices and standard business processes” (ISS Strategy). Furthermore, culture is under the consideration in this company. Therefore, in the overall ISS’s business strategy, developing locally to have an international position is mentioned many times.

3.4.1. ISS strategic cornerstones

The main component of the ISS HR strategy is the development of capable employees in all functions and team spirit and self-governance are also promoted. ISS is the composition of customer focus, people management, and the IFS strategy and multi local approach.

Customer focus- ISS puts its main focus on the customers by serving them as best they can by identifying their individual needs and wishes.

Human resource management- It plays the vital role in the company as it is the core competence of every competence. They minimize the risks by applying leadership skills, HR and employee training.

IFS strategy- It is the strategic aim of the company. They advance their services by towards IFS by building the ISS House of services and developing facility management capabilities.

Multi- local approach- to ensure timely responses to demands and requests, local leadership and autonomy are operated strongly. Group fundamentals and strategic directions are also reflected the overarching with the purposes of exploiting the best practices and leverage their geographical footprint. ISS applies only light and tight financial control.

Customers are the first item on the list and have highly focused. In other words, the quality services of ISS mainly depend on customers- the key points of success. Moreover, to win in international markets with fifty branches around the world with the understanding that for a Service Company, employees are important, ISS also consider human resource management in the intercultural is parts of their strategies.

3.4.2. ISS Vision and values

The ISS Company is doing their service business following four main short visions including:

- “Lead Facility Services globally by leading Facility Services locally”
- “Lead globally with presence in all main regions and countries”
- “Lead locally with leading positions in all established markets and the ambition to quickly achieve this position in new markets”
- “Lead the industry by offering best-in-class single services and IFS”. (The ISS official website)

ISS makes positioning their business by choosing growing business from small niche (locally) to gain to global markets. It is possible that in each region, ISS finds an approach to adapt to its culture as well as local customers' desires.

ISS operates the shared values to build up sustainability. By combining four implementations including honesty, responsibility, quality and entrepreneurship, ISS created values to define who they are and guarantee their sustainable and smooth business.



Figure 2. The ISS values

Source: The ISS main websites, ISS values,
http://www.issworld.com/about_iss/strategy/pages/our_values.aspx

Customers satisfaction is kept into consideration in such businesses. Nowadays, the ISS company has invaded its area in a great extent. It covers almost every University or other schools in Jyväskylä. Before ISS, SOL was doing its business in all the Universities. This shows that the company is quite customer oriented and customer centeredness so that it is able to increase its client gradually.

3.5. Partnership

Being one of the largest facility services company in the world, it wants to continue to invade more in the field of services. In order to fulfill the dream they do the partnership with various industry organizations, international institutes and other international organizations which are useful for them in the context of providing outsource services.

ISS has been in partnership with some of the FM industry organizations. IFMA foundation, global FM, IFMA, Euro FM and IAOP are some them with which ISS is

linked with. It is also connected with Real Estate organization, cleaning organization, security organization, HR organization and Education organization.

3.6. Objectives and targets

With respect to the values and strategy of the company, the ISS way of continuous improvement, certain objectives and targets has been set so as to improve in the areas of people, planet and profit.

- The main objective of the company is to prevent fatalities at the work places. The target group for the company is 0.
- The target group of the company for the year 2011 is to reduce Lost Time Incidents Frequency (LTIF) by 25%
- .The target of the company to reduce Total Reportable Cases Frequency (TRCF) in the year 2011 is also at least 25%.
- Reduction of the carbon emissions from the cars used by the company over the leasing period of 4 years by 15%.

These objectives are obvious in SMART (Short- Measurable- Achievable –Reachable- Timely) model. With the firm position in service market and clear numbers of target group as well as lost reducing, this targets are seen as to be in the right track to keep guarantee the company's value as well as the sustainability in business.

4. Service Quality

4.1. Quality definition

“Quality” and “consistency of service” are two terms which usually go with each other in any academic research paper relating to quality service. It was said that “Delivering consistently good service quality is difficult but profitable for service

organizations” (Valarie A. Zeithaml, Leonard L. Berry, & A. Parasuraman, 1988). There are many different concepts used to understand and define “Quality”. Moreover, the quality definition can be changed according to the people view and criteria it will be used. “Quality” exists in any parts of company operations and business fields which companies are working in. Besides these, “quality” base will be different between product and service companies. For instance, mentioning about quality of the products, for manufacturers, the quality will depend on the quantities and quality of tangible products produced from companies, while for service companies, their products are services which are intangible and uncountable also. Thus, “it is important to understand the various perspectives from which quality is viewed in order to fully appreciate the role it plays in many parts of business organizations” (James R. Evans & Williams M. Lindsay, 2002, p. 11).

Tom, Engibous who is the president and chief executive officer of Texas Instruments stated on the present and future importance of quality in 1997. According to him, “Quality will have to be everywhere, integrated into all aspects of a winning organization” (Dr. Bassem Kaissi, 2008).

Many of the experts gave their own words to define the word quality. One of the first definitions about it was brought by Deming and Juran after the World War 2 as "Quality is fitness for use”

Moreover Helio Gomes and Helio listed different quotes of quality in their book named Quality Quotes.

“Quality is ballet, not hockey”, quality is an elusive (intangible) & indistinct (obscure) construct. (Quality is free, 1979- Philip Crosby)

“Quality is to give the customer what they want” - Sam Walton

“Quality is meeting or exceeding customer expectations at a cost that represents value to them” (Harrington)

“Quality is the totality of the features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy a given need” (ISO 9000 Series standards)

Quality means best for certain customer conditions. These conditions are

- The actual use
- The selling price of the product

(Armand V. Feigenbaum- 2004)

From the above definition mentioned by the experts, it is understandable that customers are always right and the organization should try to fulfill their demand. Otherwise it would be just losing your customers and the business. Before implementing any plans to improve the quality, the organization should know the way the customers see the quality.

With help of this research, it will be easier to find out how the customers of Agora University building want to experience the quality. Every customer will definitely have different view than the other. However, the company has to act by keeping every customer's view into consideration to satisfy them and run the business.

4.2. Service definition

Service can be defined as “any primary or complimentary activities that does not directly produce a physical product- that is, the non-goods part of the transaction between buyer (customer) and seller (provider).” (D.A Collier, 1987, p79) The word service is very complicated and vast which can mean different things to different people in many different contexts. It is also intangible but in the case of cleaning services, it includes certain tangible products used for cleaning such as hand towels, some new chemicals or disinfection liquids etc. The Intangible nature of service makes it more unpredictable.

Haywood – Farmer and Nollet summarized the difficulty of defining service:

“Despite more than 25 years of study, scholars in the field of services management do not agree on what a service is. Indeed, instead of coming closer to a definition then seem to be less certain... the problem is trying in a few words to describe 75 per cent of the economic activity of developed

nations. Is it any wonder that there are exceptions for all definitions?"

(Haywood – Farmer J. and Nollet J., 1991)

The definition of service as Johnston and Clark (2005, 10) put it is “*the combination of outcomes and experiences delivered to and received by a customer*”. In this research of Agora University building, the customers judge the quality of the service. From the customers’ perspective, service is the combination of their experience and their perception of the outcome of the service. The service is physically intangible and it is more like a process than a thing, and production and consumption are to some extent simultaneous activities (Mills, 1977; Shostack, 1977; Grönroos, 1990).

In some business the service process and the consumption of service is done continuously. For example, in a restaurant the customers are consuming the service continuously but in the case of Agora university building, the customers’ participation is irregular.

Operation

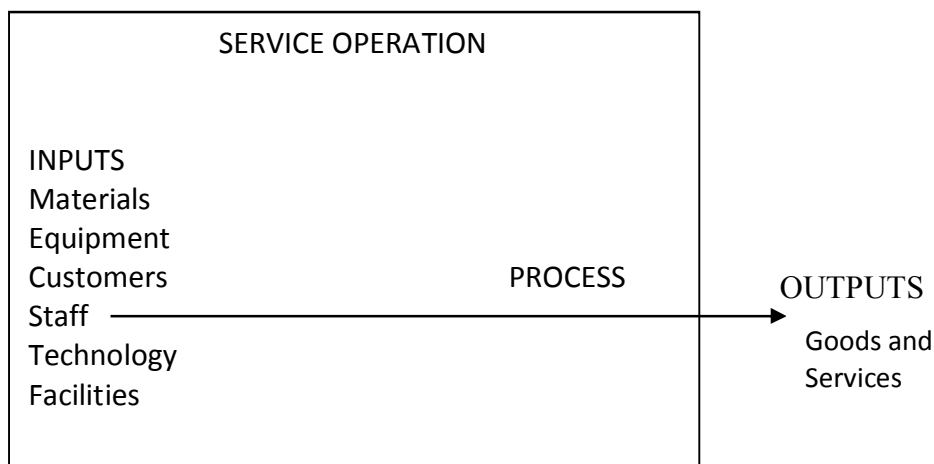


Figure 3. Service Operation Management (Johnston and Graham 2005, p.5)

The productivity of economic activities is usually of two types: tangible and intangible. Tangible products can be goods which customers can touch by hands, see by eyes. The intangible ones are mainly services. “The main characteristics of services are often mentioned: Services are considered to be intangible (immaterial), inseparable (in production and consumption), heterogeneous (i.e. instantly variance) and perishable” (Göran Goldkuhl and Annie Röstlinger, 2000)

Nowadays, service is one of the key components in the economies of countries especially in those of the developed ones. Service sectors contribute as generators of GDP in many countries (ODI Briefing Notes, 2008). However, the natural concept of service appears more and more difficult to define as for the association and combination with the goods. Service includes different characteristics compared to product. Based on the research and teaching of Mr. A. Parasuraman, V.A.Zeithaml, and L.L.Berry about quality service, Mr. Sunil Thawani - American Society for Quality Country Councilor for UAE pointed out seven characteristics making service distinguish from products.

1. Intangibility: Service cannot be touched physically by hands as products
2. Inseparability: "Production and consumption of many services are inseparable" in contradiction "service providers do not have the benefit of a factory serving as a buffer between production and consumption. Service customers are often in the service factory, observing and evaluation the production process as they experience the services"
3. Heterogeneity: The qualities of services are valued variably from the customers to customers as different people have different point of view on the service they have received. Besides these, the performances of service also depend on providers.
4. Differing Standards and Criteria of Service: Service is not the same as product which customer can buy and take time to evaluate the quality. Service is provided and used at the same time therefore it is more difficult for customers to value, and fore marketers to do research
5. Perishability. Service cannot be stored or retained after being produced.
6. Simultaneity: the producing process and consuming happens simultaneously.
7. Customer Participation in the Service Process: The presence of the customer as a participant in the service process requires an attention to facility design that is not found in traditional manufacturing operations (Sunil Thawani, 2007, pp 3-4)

In Finland, from 19th century, nearly half the work force is in privately owned company. In another words, Finland has service economy and almost all their business base on this sector. Thus, there will be much concentration put into it. Finnish companies as well as people will demand a better quality for their services to increase

the competitiveness and requirement of domesticity and internationality. The information collected in the graph (2003) below will provide more obvious data to prove the importance of service in Finland.

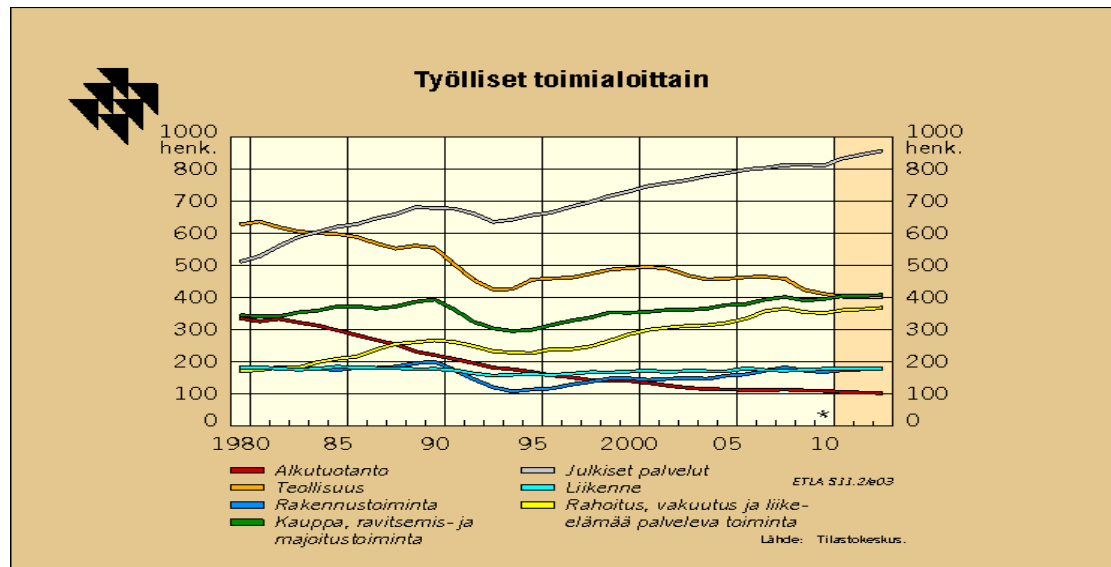


Figure 4. Labor force distribution

Source: Labor force distribution (2003), www.tt.fi, Achieved 21st November, 2011

4.3. Service quality definition

Service quality is considered as an important tool for a firm's struggle to differentiate itself from its competitors (Ladhari, 2008, p.172).

According to Douglas & Connor, (2003, p.166), Parasuraman et al., (1985, p.42), and Ladhari, (2008, p.172), the intangible elements of a service (inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability) are the critical determinants influencing service quality perceived by a consumer.

As Lewis and Booms (1983) have put it, "service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations Delivering quality service means confirming to customer expectations on a consistent basis".

“Because of intangibility, the firm may find it difficult to understand how consumers perceive their services & evaluate service quality”. (Zeithaml, 1981)

It can be seen from the definition of “quality” and “service”, there is the presence of customers every time which shows the vitality of customers. While in “Quality” concept, Customers are considered as one dimension, or perspectives to measure, in “service”, they are a part which cannot be missed when conducting business. Therefore, this chapter will be more focus on the understanding of “quality” from Service Company’s perspectives which consider customers as the driven for their qualities. Any action which is directly proportional toward providing the quality to the consumers with products, goods or services is termed as quality assurance. (James R. Evans, William M. Lindsay- 2002). There are seven criteria listed by James R Evans and William M. Lindsay. They are as follows

- Judgment Criteria
- Product based criteria
- User-based criteria
- Value based criteria
- Manufacturing based criteria
- Integrating –based criteria
- Customer- driven quality.

Obviously, except for product based and manufacturing criteria five of these criteria left can be used to define quality for Service Company. From the first criteria, although customers are not called in to label for judgment criteria, they are the judge who give the last decision about the measurement of service quality. These cases are also caught in user-based criteria, when customers are the users of the service besides the “internal customers”.

Quality as the definition in dictionary in general is defines as “that which makes something what it is, characteristic element, basic nature, kind, and the degree of excellence of something excellent, superiority” (Merriam-Webster, online dictionary). As this objective definition, “quality” is used to define the “nature” of something and its high standard as the degree of excellence. Thus, partly, the whole phrase “quality

service” can be understood as the nature of service- a form of business or business products and the excellent standard it needs to reach or meet.

As in ISO 8402-1986 standard which many business dictionaries define, “quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs” (Business dictionary online). It is obvious that, quality concept have strong relation to the satisfaction of customers to company products or services or customer base is one of the main elements which should be viewed when define “quality” of especially service. In the book “The management and control of quality”, fifth edition by James R. Evans & William M. Lindsay, the author gave the concept of quality which mention about the “customer- driven quality” as “the meeting or exceeding customer expectations”. All the companies have desire to reach a good quality meaning that all the companies try to match their products and service with customers’ satisfaction. However, customer is also a complicated concept and has some categories.

Theoretically, there are two types of customers including internal and external ones. In the first type of customers- internal, the definition of final users and consumers are usually mixed up. Consumers are not compulsory to be final using the products or services. For instance, in the ISS case, the owners of the building who sign the contract with ISS company about providing services to this building can be seen as consumers of this services, however, the final customers who use, experience and judge the quality of ISS services quality in this building are people who are working or have been using services inside this building and have advantages of the facilities there. For the external customers, they are “who receive goods or services from the supplier inside the company” (The management and control of quality”, fifth edition by James R. Evans & William M. Lindsay, p 15). In the ISS case they can be the employees who work as cleaners or people who directly work to provide quality service. They receive the guides, instruction about cleaning professional skills as well as material for cleaning such as chemicals, mops, etc. supporting for service providing process. In all group of customers, the need of quality service and product are existing, moreover, they have relation and integration.

Comparing the quality of services is one of the toughest challenges which professionals face in their career because of the intangible nature of the service offering. The word quality may be defined in different ways by different people

according to the situation. However the service quality is defined clearly when there is one to one interaction between the consumer and the service provider.

Quality has always been a part of the business and played a vital role in business either it is big or small firm. In the initial stage of any business, the owner has to throw out the quality methods so that the customers always want to buy or use the services of the company as the loyal customer. Productivity, cost and quality are the three main pillars of success of any company. Productivity, the actual amount of output of the materials consumed by the customers per unit of input, the operational cost and the quality of the goods and services which is directly proportional to the customers satisfaction, all contribute the success of the company and hence lead to profitability. Good quality increases productivity, profits and other issues relating with success of the company. In addition good quality also helps to develop satisfied customers due to whom other people are also attracted towards the company or it is also the free advertisement of the company through the word of mouth (The management and control of quality, 2002)

According to Kendrick, Michael (1994), there are thirty ingredients of quality services. Thirty points demonstrated as a long time of assembling the observations, researching and study from the suggestion of W. Wolfensberger in 1983. Generally, thirty elements listed mentioned to two main objectives: customers and service providers. To provide the best services, the providers need to have understanding of the service and standards as well as the demanding for their customers. They also need to be provided the good materials. These are mentioned as “appropriate acknowledgment and support for the existential, emotional and spiritual struggles of the person served” (Thirty elements of service quality, Michael J. Kendrick PhD, 1994). For the second objective- customers, they should be participated and cooperated with service providers in process of building quality service, and they are judges for the valuing of the end results. The service and person who designs the service also need to reach some standards for example about the location, and accessibility.

4.3.1. Benefits of service quality to the customers

Customer service is one of the most important parts of any firms or business which has been globally adopted. Keeping the quality service as the forefront of their operations makes the company better and provides their customer with quality service as per their expectation. Some of the benefits according Hunter Taylor are:

“Increase the revenue”- Quality service helps to increase of the revenues and hence it increases customer sales. When the customers meet their expectation from the goods or services of the company, customers will develop their confident level towards the company’s abilities. This action promotes them to buy some more goods or services from the same company and let them to become loyal customers.

“Enhanced company reputation”- Basically service companies are known by their services to customers. They should always be aware of the type of services they provide to the customers. Once the customers get the bad impression of the company, it will lead them to the demotion of the company. The customers who already experienced the bad service will tell their family, friends, neighbors or the people they know about the company. This could be harmful to the image of the company. On the contrary, when the customers have positive influence of the company, they will also transmit the information through blogs, website and social media. This will help the company to gain more new customers and also get the good reputation of the company.

“Increased customer satisfaction”- Customers come to us with their need of solutions for their needs, demands or difficulties. When solutions or in the other words, the products or services provided form companies reach or meet these needs, then customer satisfaction will happened. Customer satisfaction is the future for the coming back of the customers as well as customer relationship management or company reputation mentioned above. Thus, service companies’ jobs are improving their quality service to “increase customers satisfaction” which will bring back many benefits for the companies. Normally, one familiar method to know about the level of customers satisfaction is survey. The design of the survey can be varied by companies and their cases. However, in almost surveys, there should be some issues mentioned including how they satisfy with the services or products they are provided, if they

have any suggestion to companies to make their satisfaction increase, what customers do not like about the companies but like about their competitors.

“Customer Loyalty”- When companies can provide customers good solution which meet their needs, more specifically in the situation of service companies are good qualities service which satisfy customers, without doubt, the companies have built up a good relationship and impression to their “potential” customers and are in the right track to win their loyalty. They will come back to have satisfied feelings continuously. “Customer loyalty” is one of the key successes in any business fields nowadays which can help companies escape with “price war”. Moreover, according to the book “How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life” the best seller which is suggested to read to any business objectives by Michael LeBoeuf (2000), If company win one loyal customer, they have saved cost to market to have at least five potential future customers.

“Engaged Employees”- If a manufacturer wins their business by the quantities and quality of products, in service companies, the business is increased and won by the skills and the quality working of the employees. Moreover, selling and buying as well as giving services and receiving or experiencing the services is the interactions between the service companies’ employees with their customers. Thus when customers are satisfied with the quality services, the employees will also feel engaged and enhance their feeling of devoting to their jobs more which improve companies’ operations. Thus quality service does not only bring the benefits to the customers but also companies and their stakeholders.

The organizations should follow certain steps to improve the Service quality.

- First of all, they should be able to recognize quality problem.
- Provide some basic knowledge about quality to the staff member.
- Promise the things only which can be conveyed.
- Accept the complaints from unsatisfied customers.
- Be more customer focused

There are many advantages of being customer focused in the organization. The company can differentiate itself from the competitor and improve its image in the eyes of the customers. It also helps to minimize the price sensitivity and improve profitability. There will be continuous improvements to the operation of the company

if the company is customer centered. (The stairway consultancy, 2011, Customer care excellence)

4.3.2. SERVQUAL (Gap analysis model)

SERVQUAL or gap analysis was developed by Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman which is most commonly used to measure service and quality.

SERVQUAL is the multi- item scale developed to access customer perceptions of service quality in a service and retail businesses (Parasuraman et. al, 1988)

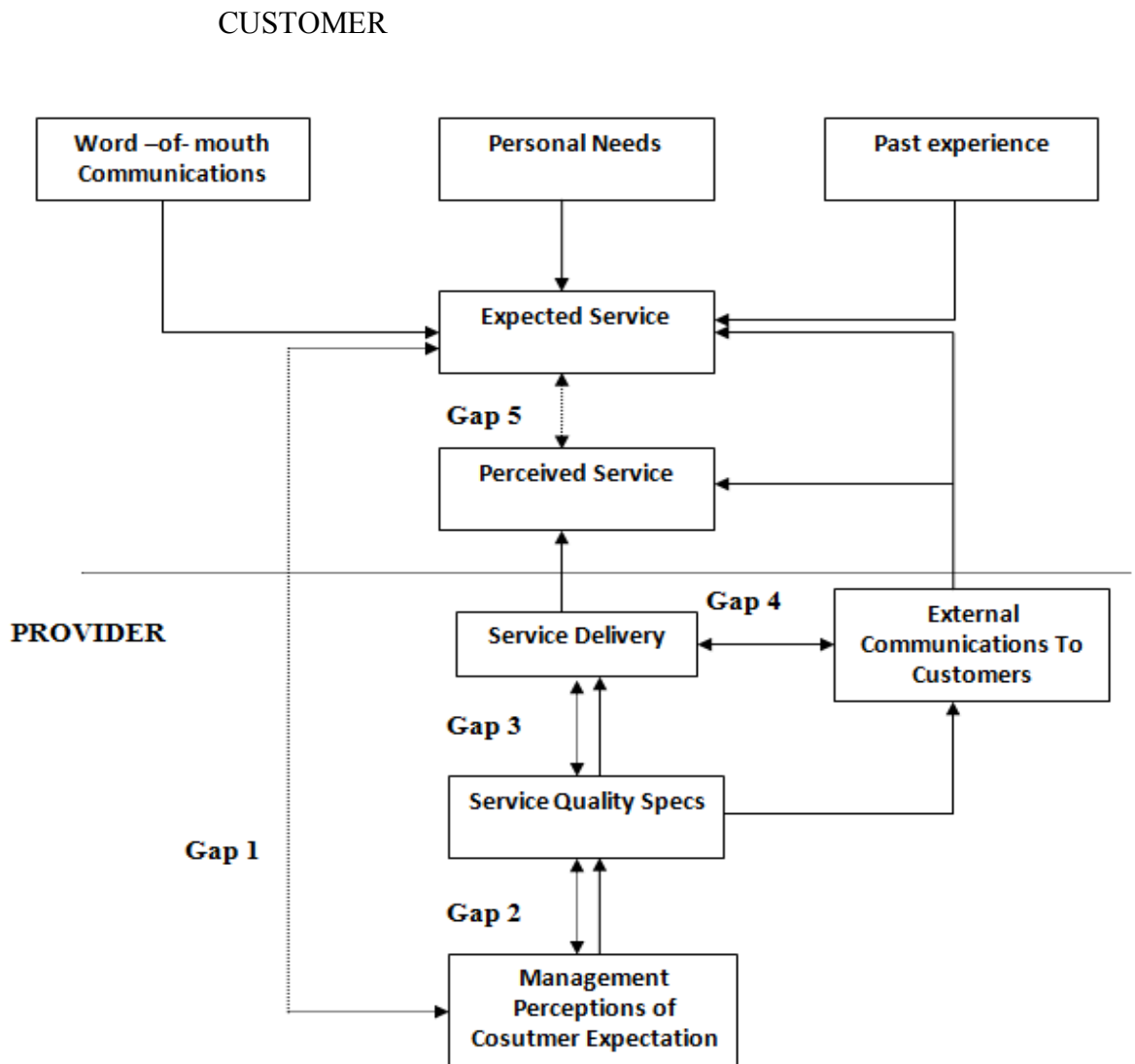


Figure 5. Conceptual model of service quality by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, (1985)

Use of the SERVQUAL model makes it easier to assess the service quality from the customer's perspective and also helps in tracking the customers' expectations and perceptions over time and also differences between them. It also allows the organizations to compare their service with other competitors providing the same service and hence to improve in their service for better quality and customer satisfaction.

In the SERVQUAL model there are five different gaps which show the weaknesses of the company in fulfilling customer needs. Gap analysis is used to identify and correct gaps between the desired level of the customers and the actual level of performance provided by the organizations.

Gap 1: The first gap is about the difference between actual customers' expectation and the idea of the management team about customers' expectations. The reasons for the gaps may be the lack of marketing orientation. The organizations are not able to provide their customers a clear view of the services they are going to provide. It may be also inadequate information from the company to the costumers. The other factor is the structure of the organizations which includes too many levels of management.

In order to reduce the first gap of the model, the organizations should enhance the research activities so that they can observe and recognize the customers' needs and wants. In the larger organizations like ISS, where there are more level of management, the management should be able to make sure that there are enough opportunities for upward communication.

Gap 2: This gap is about the wrong service quality standards provided by the organizations. In other words, it explains the inconsistency of quality specifications with supplier's perceptions of the quality expectation of the customers. The reason for this gap is the insufficient dedication towards the service quality. The planning in the organizations may be poor and also it may be lacking goal- setting. This problem is also associated with the first gap of the model. It can also be possible that the

management has the sufficient information about customers' expectations, but the planning may still fail. The management of the organizations should be in good contact with the service provider when making plans so that the plans that they make can be smoothly implemented.

Gap 3: This gap is about the uncertain role and role conflict. It also means that the quality services are not met by employing unskilled or wrong person in the organization. They should be well trained and highly skilled for the jobs. The reason of the existence of the gap could be lack of technology and perceived control. Lack of team work also affects the service of the organization. The improvements can be made through changing the control systems to be more uniform by training the staffs and good team work.

In many cases, even the skills and attitudes of the staffs cause problems. As there could be the people who cannot adapt the requirements of the systems, it is necessary to make the improvement in the recruiting procedures.

Gap 4: This gap in the model illustrates the inconsistency of the promises of the delivered service to the customers. A gap may be formed if the marketing and production are not managed in a proper way. Mostly the customers are influenced by what they hear and see about the company. The company like ISS is one of the biggest facility service companies providing a wide range of services. Therefore, the people will go for it rather than choosing other organizations hoping to get the quality service. But sometime the company cannot fulfill all the requirements of the customers which are mentioned in the campaigns. This could be another reason for widening the gaps. For the improvement, there should be implementation external marketing communication campaigns with service production and service delivery. Over promising should also be avoided in order to narrow the gap. If this gap is not taken into consideration, then it can lead to negative customer perception.

Gap 5: This gap shows the difference between the customers' expectation and their perceptions of the delivered service. Customers expect certain kind of services from the certain companies. Customers' expectations are influenced by personal needs, word of mouth recommendation and experience of past services. This gap in the companies can bring negative influences on the image of the company.

5. Customer satisfaction

“It is not enough just to give good service; the customer must perceive the fact that he or she is getting good service”. - Albrecht and Zemke (1987)

“It is not enough anymore to merely satisfy the customer; customers must be “delighted”- surprised by having their needs not just met, but exceeded”. – A. Blanton Godfrey

Customer satisfaction is related to customer loyalty, which in turn is related to profitability (Heskett et al., 1994, and discussed in Storbacka et al., 1994).

The service profit chain (Heskett et al., 1994) hypothesizes that: **Customer Satisfaction --> Customer loyalty --> Profitability**

Consumer satisfaction plays a very important role in business administration, not only because it has direct influence on the performance of the organizations (Wong, 2000; Fornell, 1992), but because it is highly associated with the competitive advantages of the institutions and organizations in the marketplace (Greenland, Coshall, & Combe, 2006). Nowadays every organization has realized the importance of customers satisfaction. It is also the fact that it is easy to deal with the old customer and is also less costly rather than gaining the new one. It is accepted that there are the strong link within customer satisfaction, customer retention and profitability. As a whole we can say that customer satisfaction is the measure of success of every organization.

Therefore the companies are paying attention towards improving their service for better customer satisfaction. Satisfaction can be measured by the number of customers who come back to the same company to buy their goods or services. The image of the company also play vital role in making the customer buy the service from the company. For e.g. ISS being one of the biggest and renowned companies has its own image to attract customers.

As competition in the business has become more global and more intense, most of the organizations have realized that they cannot only be in the competition with price. It is

obvious that in the market many companies have developed the strategy of providing customer care to separate their products and services.

The company should also be aware of the changing nature of customers. They have high expectation of the service which they want to receive from. From one of the research by the Henley Centre, it was found out that 35 percent of the adults in UK like to complain from time to time and according to the survey 45 per cent of the adults complained about poor service which was raised from 39 per cent (1997 survey) and 42 per cent on the telephone (up from 27 per cent in 1997) (The stairway consultancy, 2011, Customer care excellence). This shows that the today's customers are more demanding, sophisticated and informed.

Customer satisfaction is critical and strategic decision that every organization should be aware of in order to maximize and to stay in the competitive business. Customer satisfaction helps the companies to develop the long term relationship with their customers as the satisfied customers want to receive the service from the same organization. In an average, it has been estimated that the cost of acquiring the new customer is five times more expensive than keeping the old one. Therefore it is more profitable for the organization to keep long term relationship with the customer which can be obtained through customer satisfaction. Some of the benefits of having the satisfied customers can be listed below.

1. It is expensive to get the new customer compare to old one.
2. Satisfied customers are more prone to recommend the organization.
3. Having the loyal customers make survival of the competitors difficult.
4. It is easier to serve the regular customer because you will know the needs of expectation of the customers.
5. The satisfied customers are willing to pay the price offered by the organization.

The figure below clearly shows the importance of customer satisfaction within in organizations.

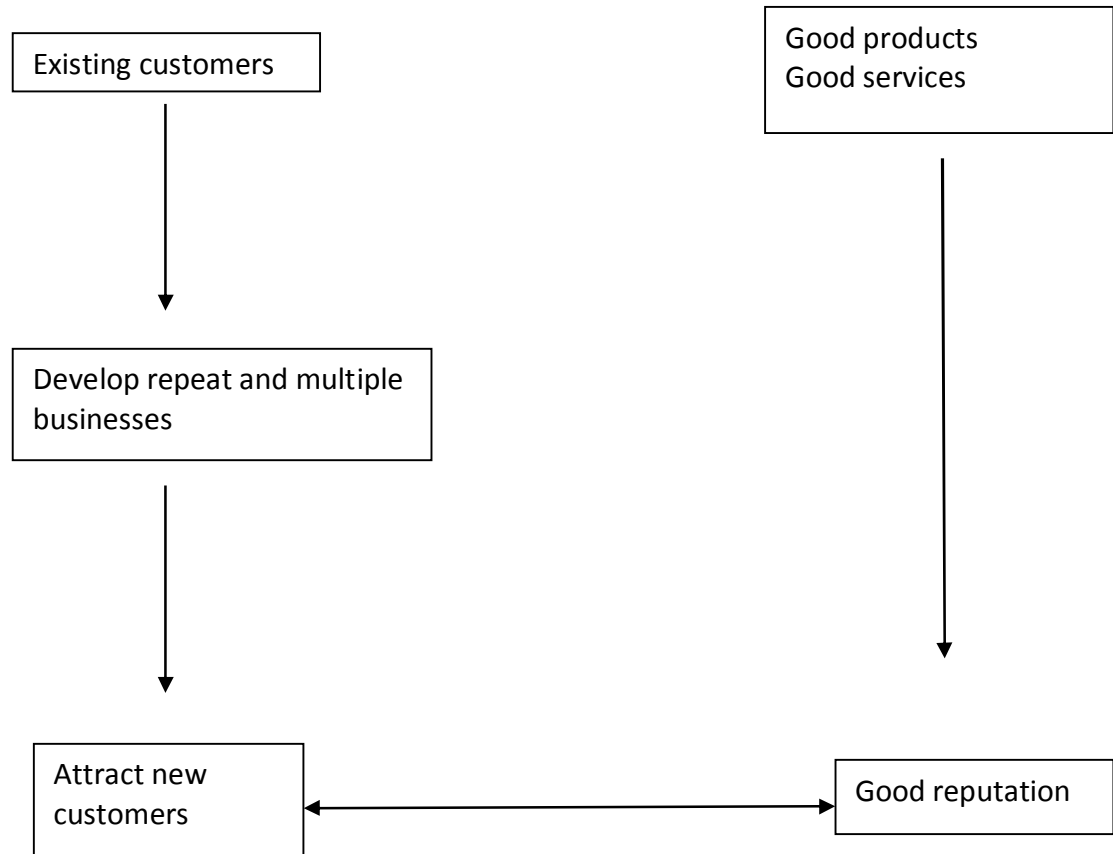


Figure 6. The power of existing customers

Customer care excellence, How to create an effective customer focus (Sarah Cook, 2008. p10)

5.1. Factors affecting customer satisfaction

There are many factors affecting customer satisfaction. Some of them are listed below.

1. The ability of the service provider to act efficiently before the deadline given to the client.

2. The complaint management can be also listed as a factor that affects customer satisfaction because the service business gets lots of complaints from the clients.
3. Staff appearance is also a factor which creates customer satisfaction to some extent.

6. Analysis of Research result

6.1. Research result

The aim of the survey was to explore the current problems in the cleaning service and to provide them with prompt solutions and also the satisfaction level of the customers using the cleaning service in the Agora University building. With the results based on the survey, the company tries to improve its quality service of cleaning.

The questions of the survey were designed to find out if the customers are happy with the cleaning service of ISS facility Service Company and to come up with improvements to develop the cleaning service quality and to upgrade customer satisfaction. To make sure that the survey met the requirement set and if it was understandable, the supervisor of this research also gave his view of the survey.

During the research, the result found were mostly positive regarding cleaning services of ISS Company except few complaints and some personal issues.

6.2. Collection of Data

The survey was held in 8.3.2012 which was sent to 35 people. The survey was held for about 2 weeks in order to get as many responses as possible.

As mentioned earlier, the survey was conducted by sending the questionnaire using the Digium Marata survey software which was answered by 18 respondents with a

response rate of almost 52 percent. All the respondents were anonymous. There were 15 questions altogether of which 4 were open questions and rests were multiple choice questions. In the open questions the respondents were allowed to put their personal views and opinions. The multiple choice questions were analyzed using SPSS program with pie charts and bar graphs. Every multiple questions were given 5 options which indicate if the respondents were highly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neutral, somewhat dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied and so on.

The open ending questions were analyzed manually by comparing reply of the respondents individually.

6.3. Analysis of the result

The survey was held in English language. The answers for the open questions were read thoroughly and the most significant replies were compared with other. Some of the open questions were marked as mandatory to answer for the respondent so that it is easier to get their ideas.

The aim of the first open question in the survey was about how the users think about quality personally and assist the company in finding what could be done to give continuity for better quality.

Analyzing all the comments, it was found that for the better quality service, the company should avoid regular change of the staffs and try to get the permanent because quality varies because of the change in the staffs. The customers want the clean premises but do not want to tell the cleaning staffs. In their opinion the cleaner should recognize themselves if everything is done properly. This is possible only when there is permanent worker who know the building very well.

In terms of cleaning service, to some extent it is invisible and you do not notice the work of the cleaner, but you would notice if it were worse.

The other open question was about if the customers recommend ISS to other people. Most of the replies were yes except some had negative response about this question.

They had the opinion that the company do not take care of the customers at all. But it depends upon the people who are doing the job. Some of the worker is taking care of the customers while other is not. It means there is lack of motivation among some workers who are working in the building.

“Yes, they are friendly and helpful”

“Yes...I think they the service they provide is in professional level”

“Yes. They have friendly and service-minded cleaning personnel here at Agora.”

“Yes, but of course a bit difficult to say because e.g. the prize of services or the working conditions of employees are not known”

“Yes. They do a good job. I also like that they hire foreigners.”

“Yes, ISS is a good service company; their workers have experiences and can complete the work in time with good quality”

These were some of the positive response obtained from the survey. According to the answers to open response questions we can see that the customers are quite happy with the service provided by ISS. They feel that the service that has been provided is at professional level. The workers they hire are well trained and experienced and hence can complete the task with great efficiency. The staffs are friendly and ready to help the customers.

Beside these replies, some negative replies were the company does not take care of the customers. There are not enough workers to perform the work was also other reply of the customers. The numbers of employees are not adequate therefore they are not able to take care of all the customers properly. The cleaners are also exhausted if they had to do more works in less time. With the response received, this seems to be the biggest problem at the moment in the building. Is everybody in the building getting the service? Are the cleaners tired of working with fewer time limits or is the problem with insufficient worker or the workers does not know to do their job in right way?

When there are fewer workers, the qualities of work get affected easily. The quality of work should be same and equal to every customer. The customers do not want to hear any excuses about hiring of the people as they paid for the quality service which have

been promised by the company. In order to fix the problem right number of employees should be put for providing service.

The other question was about steps taken for the improvement of better service. As discussed above, there should be more people doing the particular job. Many people suggests for hiring more employees to perform the task. They also think that the area defined for one person is too big. One of the respondents mentioned that his/her office should be cleaned everyday if possible as he has allergies with dust and dirt. Some of the other replies were,

“More employees should be hired”

“Faster response to requests”

“All offices cleaned outside office hours.”

“Enough workers and survey in certain interval of time”

“Always listen to your customers. More workers to do the work.”

“More time given to the cleaners per room”

”Feedback system”

By observing above replies, we can conclude that the current problem in the building is the lack of workers and many people are dissatisfied with it. If the number of worker is less then they cannot response to their client fast. They have many other things to do in the given time. If there is no immediate action from the employees towards clients then it will have direct effect on customer satisfaction. Customers also want their office to be cleaned nicely by giving more time and they want it to be cleaned after office hours. So there is the need of some people working in the evening shift also. Therefore, the company should direct their attention toward hiring the new people and train the old ones in order to provide service quality and continuous customer satisfaction.

Feedback system also play vital role in maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction. As the needs of the customer changes quite often therefore it is necessary to conduct survey in certain interval of time to know the needs of customer. This will

help the company to improve their strategy or change it totally according to the needs of the customers.

In the survey, clients were asked about the suggestion for improvement. Most of them went with better salary of the employees. This is one of the ways of motivation to the worker. They try to give their best performance if motivated. The other reply was taking care of the employees by the company which is also part of motivation. If the employee feels like he/she is taken care of, they will be motivated for better service.

“Maybe more workers. Then maybe few workers could also work in the afternoons”

“Work should be done as customer point of view”

In Most of the cleaning business, the workers come in the morning to do the job and the full time worker is present in the building until 1 or 2 o'clock. After that if something went wrong with the cleaning service then there is nobody to whom customer can complain. So there should be at least 1 worker present in the building for the late afternoon.

6.3.1 Service used

Following bar graph shows how long the people have been using the cleaning service provided by ISS. From the bar graph below we can see that more than 70 per cent of the clients have been using the cleaning service of ISS. About 15 per cent of them have used it for more than 6 months and 15 per cent have used them for less than 6 months. This shows that there are more customers using the cleaning service for more than a year and they still want to use it. It proves that the service provided by ISS is good and reliable and meets the customer satisfaction.

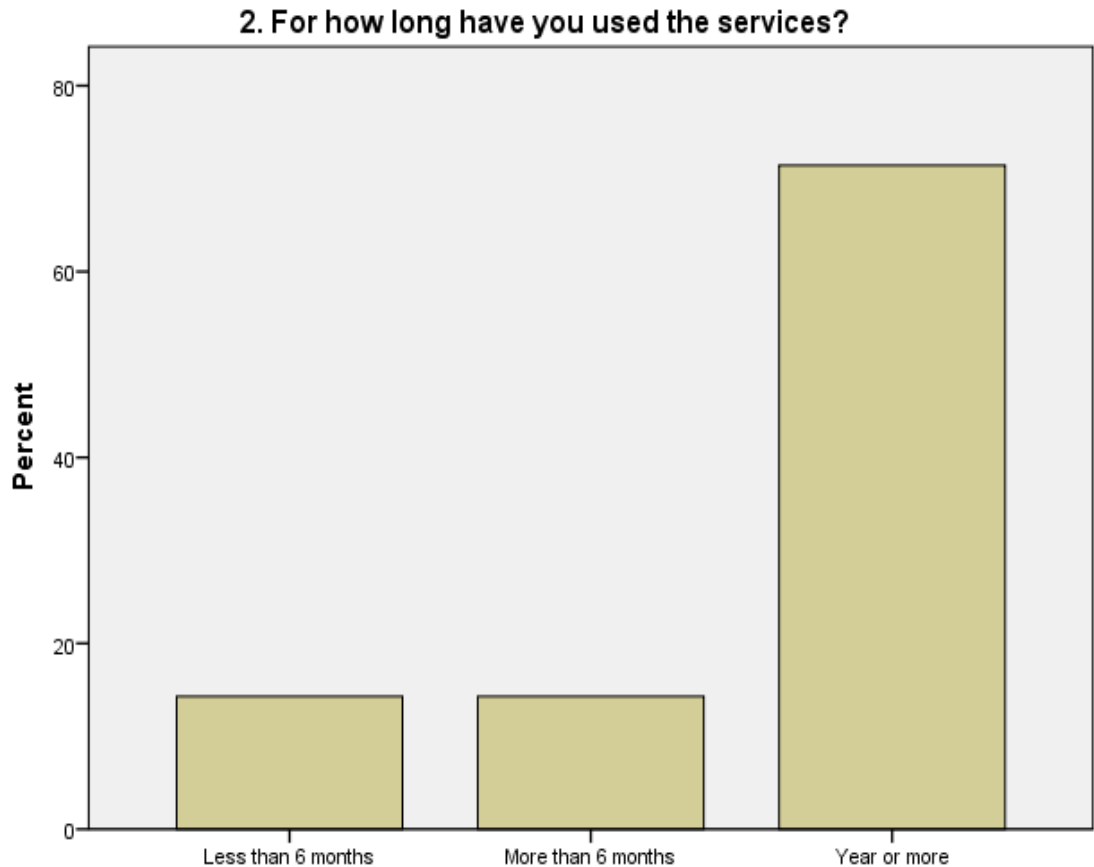


Figure 7. Usage of ISS cleaning service

6.3.2. Satisfaction level of cleaning service (ISS)

Many of the respondents went with either neutral or somewhat satisfied. 7.1 per cent somewhat dissatisfied, highly satisfied 21.4 per cent and somewhat satisfied and neutral 35.7 per cent. The bar graph shows that there are still some customers who do not feel that the service provided is good enough and the improvements discussed in the open questioned should be followed strictly in order to provide the better customer satisfaction.

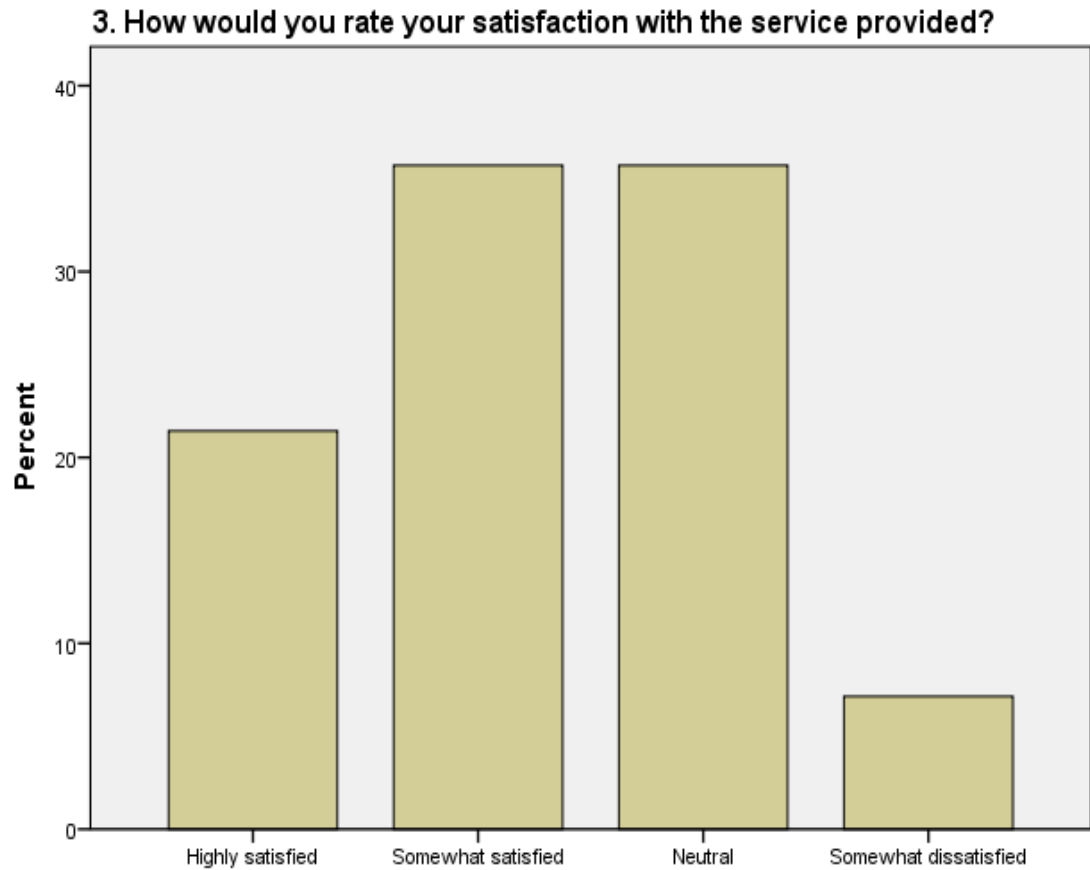


Figure 8. Satisfaction level of cleaning service (ISS)

6.3.3. ISS staffs are friendly and helpful

The staffs of the ISS service company got higher ratings and credit for their friendly behavior and readiness to help their customers. Most of the respondents went with highly agreed to the statement which was 50 per cent and 42 per cent somewhat agreed. No negative answers were seen in terms of staffs' friendliness.

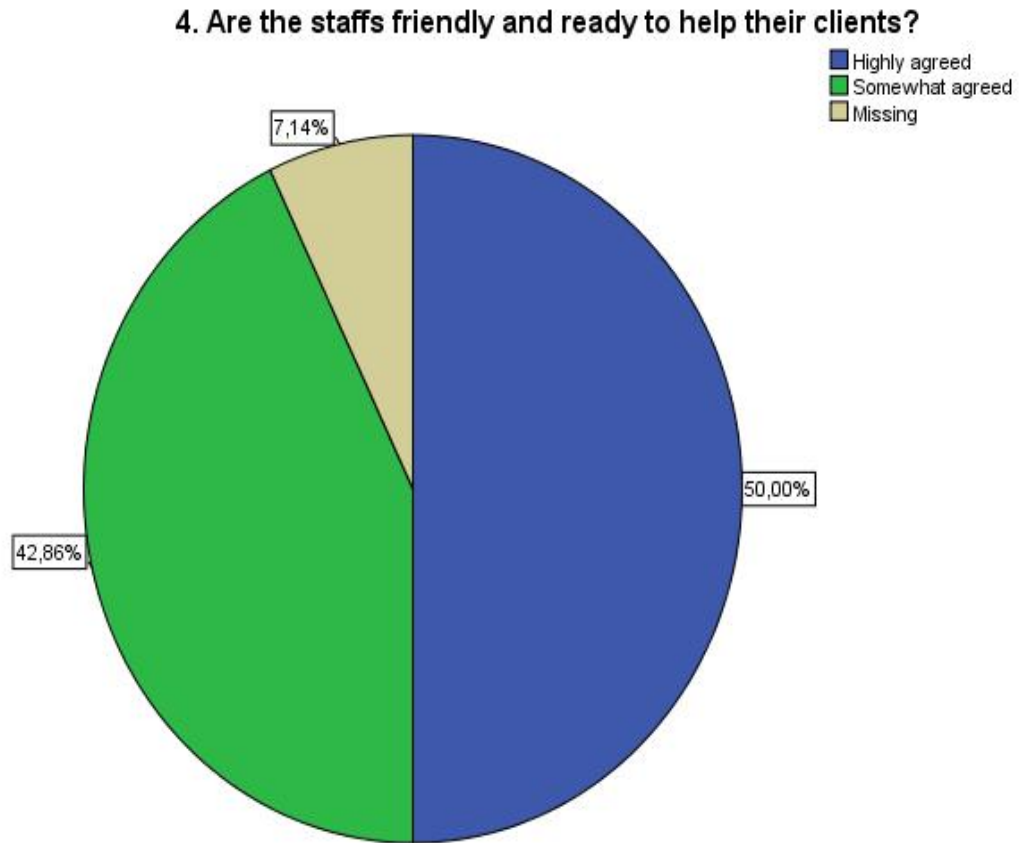


Figure 9. ISS staffs are friendly and helpful

6.3.4. Staff's support

Customers can notice that they are getting staffs support easily. From the pie chart below we can see that the majority voted for highly satisfied which is 42.86 per cent. 35.71 per cent responded to neutral feeling and 14.29 per cent of total respondent were somewhat dissatisfied with the staff's support. There could be sometimes misunderstanding between the workers and the clients because of communication problem. There are many people in Agora building who do not speak any Finnish and the staffs working there don not speak any English. So this could be one of the reasons of dissatisfaction.

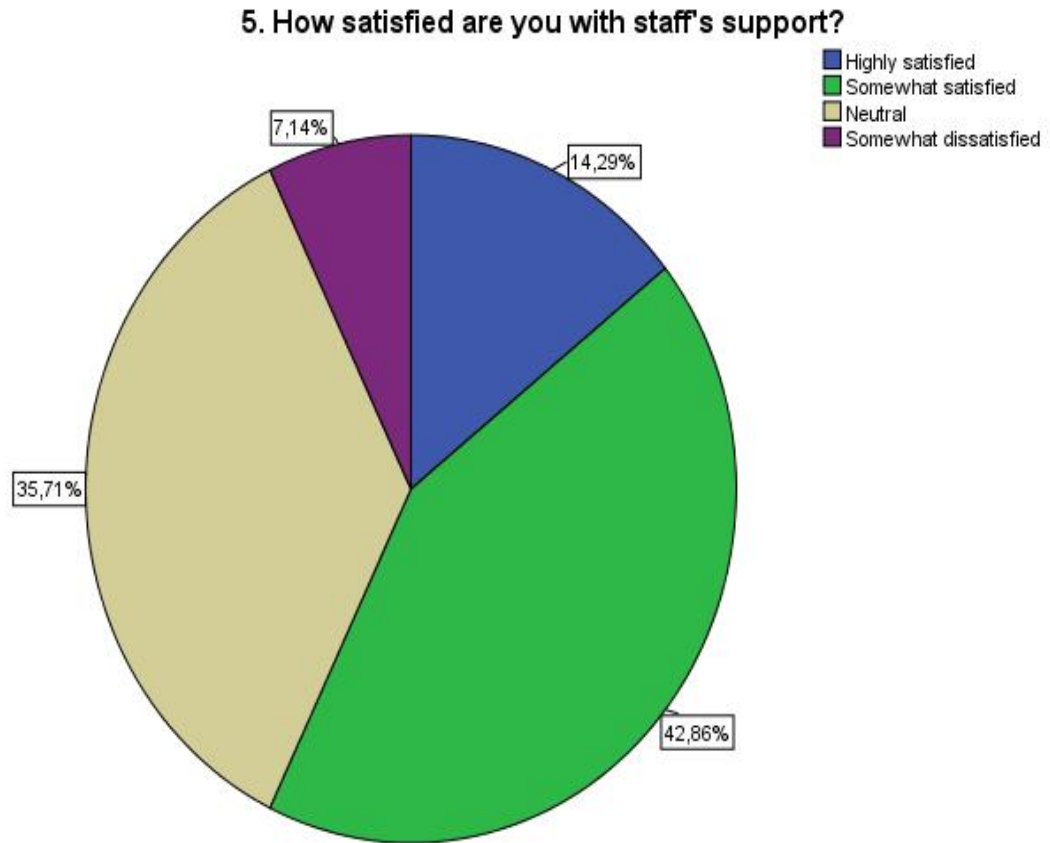


Figure 10. Staff's support

6.3.5. Immediate Response from workers

According to the bar graph below, the numbers of respondents are in favor of workers who have the good attitude towards their work and provide immediate response to the clients. 28.6 per cent of the respondents highly agreed with the statement, 42.9 per cent of the respondents went with somewhat agreed whereas 21.4 per cent of population picked for neutral and 7.1 per cent of the respondents were somewhat disagreed with the statement. It seems that some of the customers demand for more attention than others or they want individual service but the fact is that there are lots of customers in the same building and the workers do not have enough time to pay attention to each customer. Customers have felt that there is the immediate action reaction on single phone call.

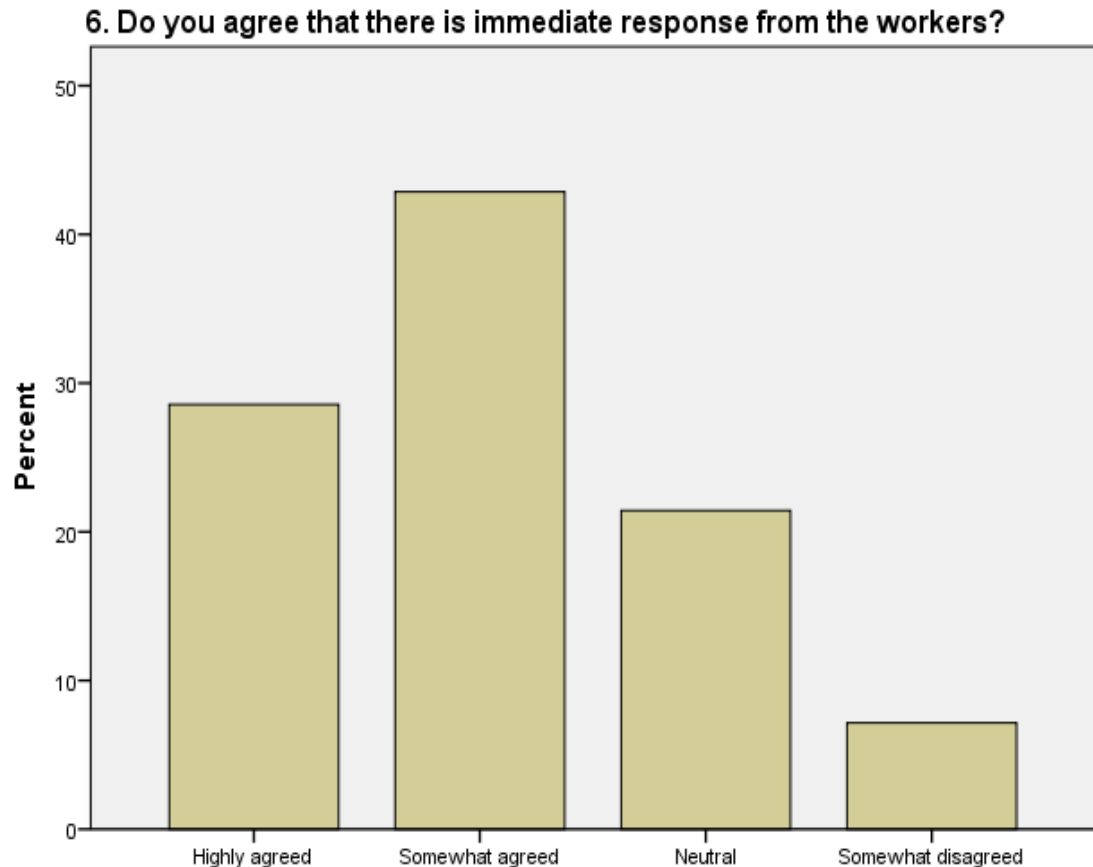


Figure 11. Immediate Response from workers

6.3.6. Enough workers for Service

From some of the above mentioned open questions also we found out that lot of customers suggested for more workers in the building. The result is same here shown in the bar graph below. There are lot of disagrees with the statement which consists of 7.1 per cent of highly disagree of the total reply and 42.9 per cent of somewhat disagree. It shows that the company is in need instant hiring of more workers. During the research it was known that the other company which was taking of the same service before had more workers than ISS. 21.4 per cent had the neutral feeling, 21.4 per cent of the respondents were somewhat agreed with statements and 7.1 per cent of them were highly agreed with the statement.

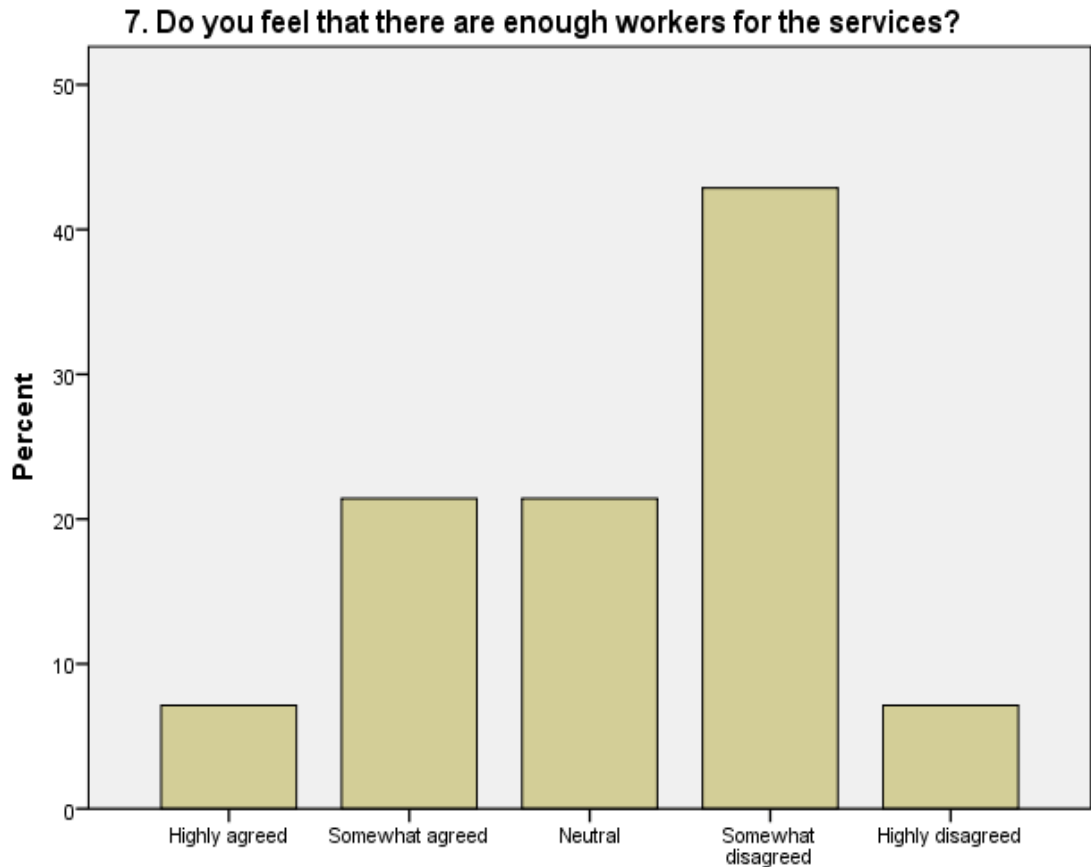


Figure 12. Enough workers for Service

6.3.7. Time tables for cleaning

Surprisingly, the reply for this statement has equal agrees and disagrees. In this case the most important places like main lobby, stairs and corridors have been cleaned in time every day as those places are visible quite easily and those are the places where there are huge rush of people every time. Thus, there are lot of dust and dirt in such places and needs to be cleaned properly in time. There are also the places which are not used by so many people or we can say that rarely used areas. These places are not paid attention that much as compare to busy areas. Therefore we can see some disagrees and some agrees for the statement. But the premises should be cleaned in time as included in the contract whereas in Agora building it has not been followed strictly due lack of workers. 21.4 per cent of the respondents were highly agreed whereas same number of the respondents deny the statement by marking in somewhat

disagree. Again 28.6 per cent of the respondents somewhat agreed with the statement and same number of respondents were neutral.

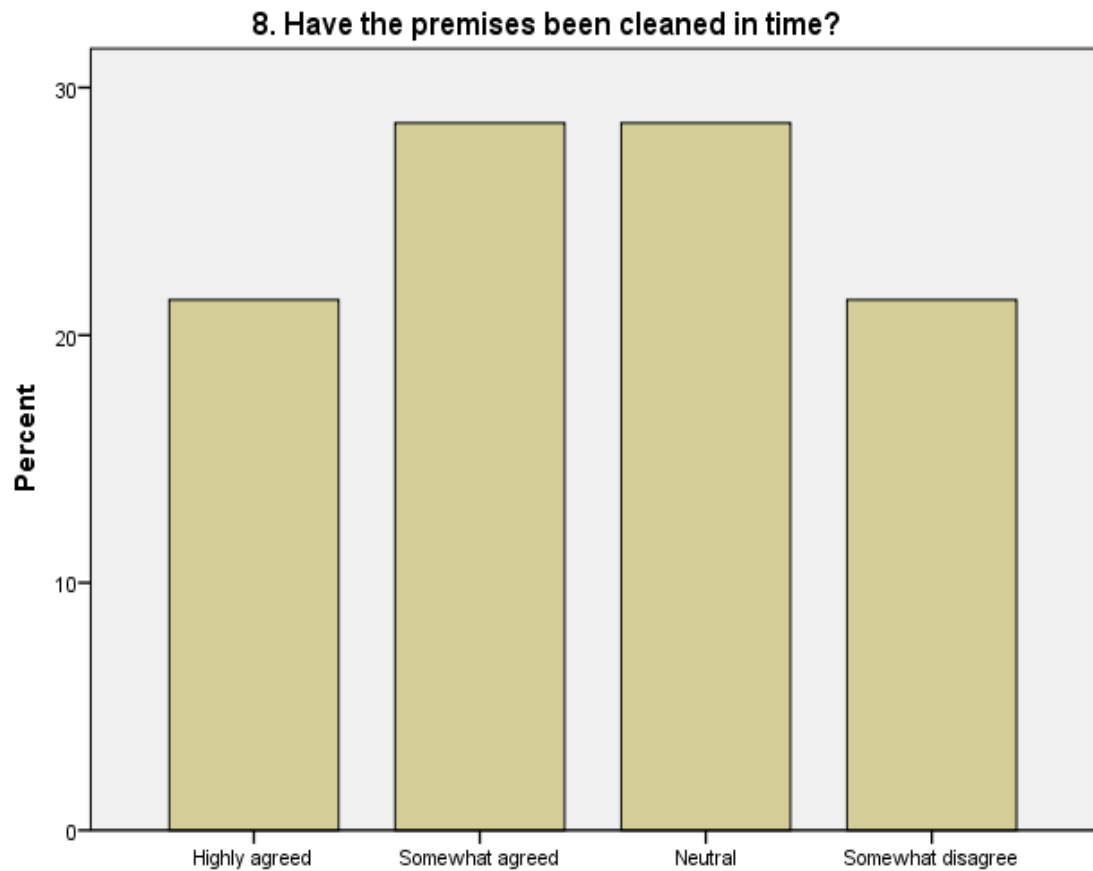


Figure 13. Time tables for cleaning

6.3.8. Service promise

Regarding this statement 50 per cent somewhat agreed and 35.7 per cent went with neutral. There was nobody who highly disagreed with the statement. 14.3 per cent highly agreed with the statement shows that the company has at least try to fulfill their services as promised in order to provide customer satisfaction.

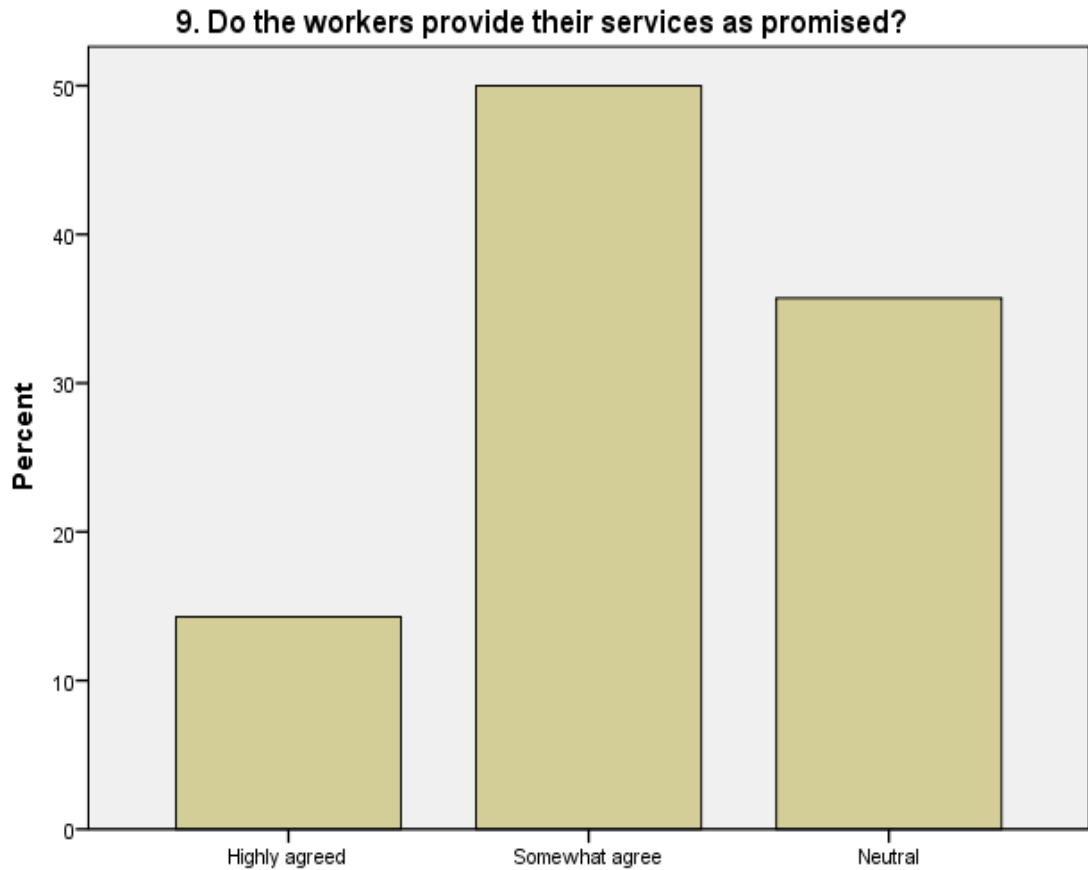


Figure 14. Service promise

6.3.9. Rating the cleanliness

In this research there was one question in which clients were asked to rate the cleanliness of the premises for e.g. toilets, offices, corridors and so on. Customers seemed to be satisfied with the office and break rooms cleaning. Over 50 per cent of the respondent gave grade four which means they agreed that the offices and break rooms were clean. Yet regarding the corridors and toilets cleaning were not enough clean to satisfy customers. We can find even the lowest grading for toilets cleaning and there were slightly more than 20 per cent for respondents who graded them 2, 3 and 4.

For the corridors about 40 per cent of the respondents gave the grade 2 which is also sign of customer dissatisfaction. 30 per cent of the respondents felt that it was good and gave them the grade of 4 and 5.

Other cleaning in the question refers to stairs, grab bar, glasses and so on. In this topic also we can see many dissatisfaction as the grade given was just 3.

With the result obtained it clarifies that there is lack of the worker who should do all these kind of extra cleaning besides normal cleaning. This kind of cleaning does not necessarily need to be done beyond working hours. It can also be done when there are people around because it will not cause any disturbance to their work. For this purpose it is better if there is somebody standby during afternoons.

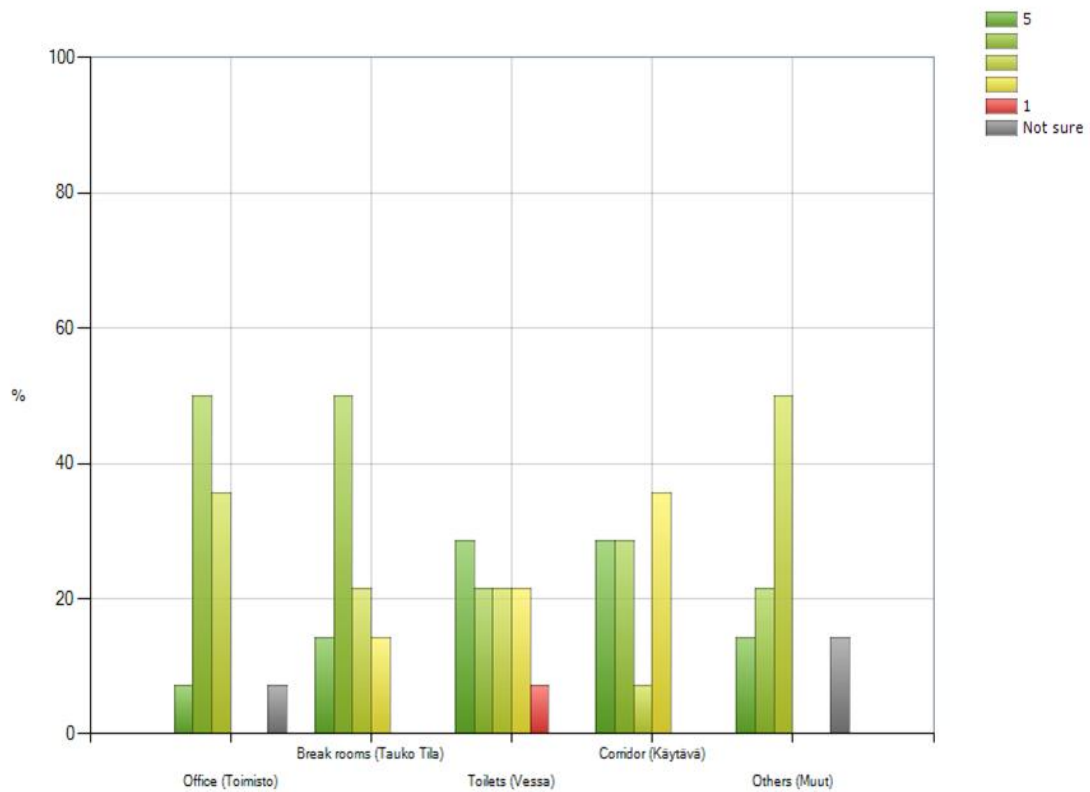


Figure 15. Rating the cleanliness

6.3.10. Overall quality of the Services of the firm

The majority went with good overall service of the company which was 50 per cent and 42.9 per cent were quite satisfied group. 7.1 per cent felt that the service provided is excellent. In general we can see that all the customers to whom the questionnaires were sent were happy with the overall quality of the service provided. The other negative alternatives were not chosen at all for this part of question. Overall the service is qualified and meets the customers' requirements.

11. How would you rate the overall quality of the services you from the firm?

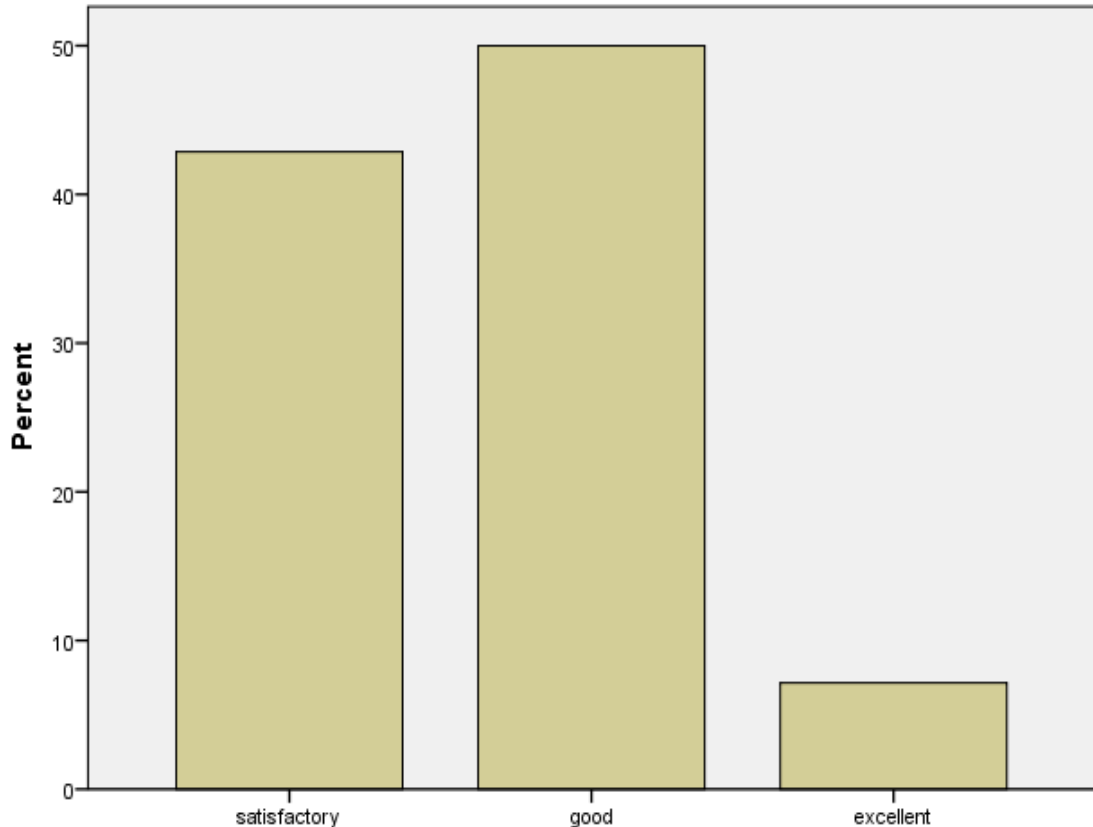


Figure 16. Overall quality of the Services of the firm

6.3.11. Feedback to the company

In giving the direct feedback to the company, most of the respondents chose the option of direct contact with the concerned people which was almost 50 per cent. Theoretically it is the best way of returning the feedback but practically it is bit difficult for the supervisor of the company as they have many other customers also and it is very difficult to give the time for every individual. But this is also the most effective way of giving the feedback. Direct contact of the customers with the supervisor helps in improving the service quality in better way. If the feedbacks are given through the workers or by any other means then there are more chances of missing of the information. The supervisor might not get the total information. The opinions about what would be the best way to keep contact varied according the customers. All the other possible alternatives were also marked such as e- mail, telephone or regular research in certain interval of time. 21.4 per cent agreed with e

mail systems, 21.4 per cent went with regular research in certain interval of time and 7.1 per cent with telephone. There was also the other alternative relating to this questions which was to give other opinions if they had any. It was specific software for feedback system.

14. What do you think is best way to give the direct feedback of the work to the company?

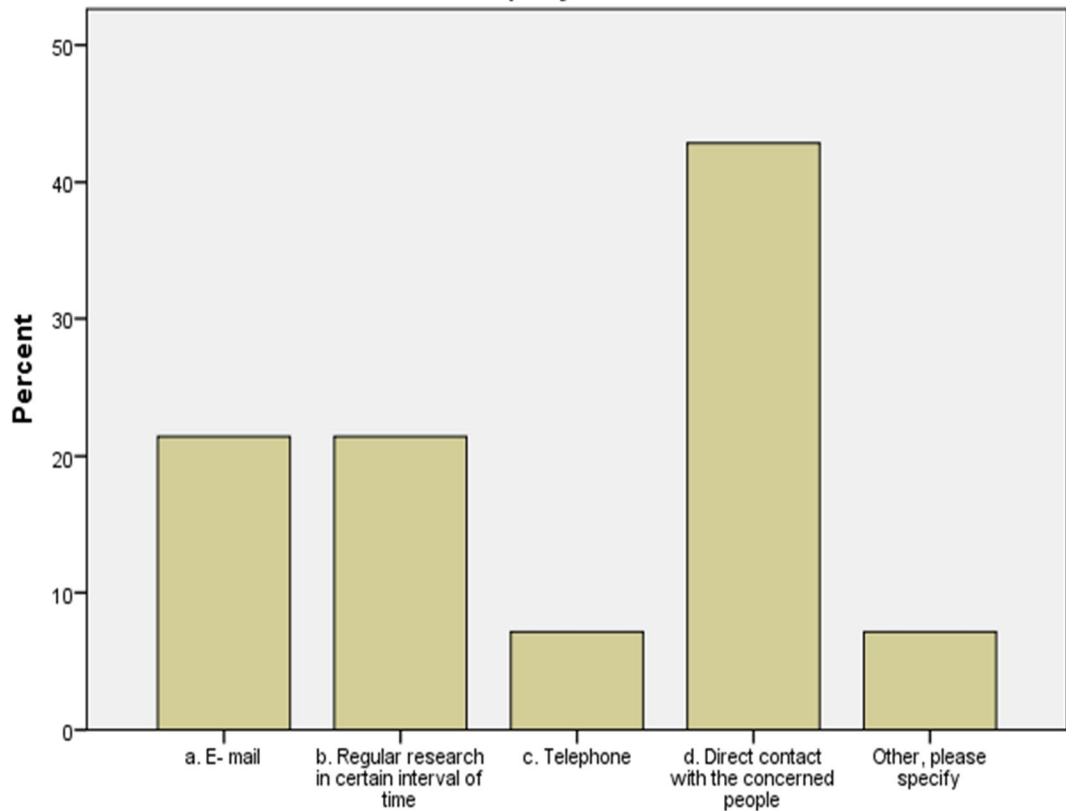


Figure 17. Feedback to the company

6.4. Conclusion

Generally, the cleaning service provided by the ISS Company turned out to be of a high quality, and the customers are satisfied with it. Yet during the research, it became evident that some part in the service should be improved for higher customer satisfaction. Regarding the survey, customers felt that there should be a regular survey of this kind at certain interval to know what the customers want. By doing so they can openly express their opinion of the service they are using. As the survey was

anonymous, people felt free to express their likes and dislikes about the service and the service company. Therefore, in this sense, it can be regarded as trustful means of survey where people do not have to incline towards the company or service provided. In this research we tried to find out if the customers are satisfied with staff's support and if they were friendly. Although the majority of the respondents had the positive replies, some improvements can still be done.

False promises should be avoided as customers will have strong negative feelings towards the worker giving them. The improvement should be done especially in the communication areas such as immediately answering phone calls, paying a visit to customers sufficiently and even greeting the customers with a smile in order to create a good relationship. The complaints lists should be checked regularly and immediate actions should be taken if something was missing or wrong. Mostly the comments on the open questions were positive. The cleaner in the Agora building got positive feedback and so did the whole company with a high level of satisfaction among the customers. Although most respondents found the service quality provided by the ISS Company good some respondents thought that they did not see much difference between ISS and other service provider companies. They had the comments that there are many other companies who are providing very possibly equal, if not better service with the best price.

Therefore, the company should be aware of the quality of its service and also of that of the competitors who are providing the same type of service with the best price (low price) including more advantages to the clients. There are bidding competitions in these type of outsource businesses which have a big effect on budgeting in the company and hence gradually result in the workers being underpaid who might be demotivated towards their duties which can be clearly noticed by the eyes of customers. The opinion of the customers of the company can be easily changed. This will lead to inevitable result in the diminution of quality of service.

The company should know that its image cannot be kept alive by words and advertisements only. Instead, it needs to try to fulfill the promises met to the customers during the contract.

The expectations of the customers became quite clear during the research process. Most of the classes and events in the Agora building start at 8:00 AM. Therefore, all the classrooms, auditoriums and lobbies should be cleaned before that time the students and teachers would not get disturbed. Accordingly, there is an extreme need of some more part time workers in the morning to finish the morning tasks before 8:00

AM. Similarly, there should be presence of at least one worker in the evening (for e.g. 14:00-21:00). It makes customers easy to complain in case of emergency.

It is evident that customer satisfaction is not only built by completing the tasks agreed in the contract. Customers are expecting something more from the company than just the item printed in the contract. They want supervisors and workers to do their job themselves because the customers do not want to spend their time on checking the premise if everything was cleaned.

Comparing the quality definitions given by the customers, it is clear that they define quality based on their own experiences and also on the image of the company they have had before. As ISS is one of the biggest and most popular service companies, customers expect more of them. It is also one of the most promising companies. It is quite difficult to please everybody and will lead the company into a dilemma if they should take into consideration or just ignore it. It is not an easy task for the company to please the client individually fulfilling each and every need of them and make some profit at the same time. In order to satisfy hundreds of clients individually, the company will have to considerably increase its employees, time, expenses and resources which is almost impossible. It is common for all the other companies in the same kind of businesses. Yet, this might help the company to make it unique among other companies in same business.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey questions

1. How do you define quality?
.....
2. For how long have you used the services?
 - a) Less than 6 months
 - b) More than 6 months
 - c) Year or more
3. How would you rate your satisfaction with the service provided?
 - a) Highly satisfied
 - b) Somewhat satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat dissatisfied
 - e) Highly dissatisfied
4. Are the staffs friendly and ready to help their clients?
 - a) Highly agreed
 - b) Somewhat agreed
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat disagreed
 - e) Highly disagreed
5. How satisfied are you with staff's support?
 - a) Highly satisfied
 - b) Somewhat satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat dissatisfied
 - e) Highly dissatisfied

6. Do you agree that there is immediate response from the workers?
- Highly agreed
 - Somewhat agreed
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat disagreed
 - Highly disagreed
7. Do you feel that there are enough workers for the services?
- Highly agreed
 - Somewhat agreed
 - neutral
 - Somewhat disagreed
 - Highly disagreed
8. Have the premises been cleaned in time?
- Highly agreed
 - Somewhat agreed
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Highly disagree
9. Do the workers provide their services as promised?
- Highly agreed
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Highly disagree
10. How do you rate the services provided? Rate from 1-5 where (1) is bad and (5) excellent
- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Office cleaning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Toilet cleaning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- c) Break rooms cleaning 1 2 3 4 5
- d) Other cleaning 1 2 3 4 5

11. How would you rate the overall quality of the services you from the firm?

1 2 3 4 5

12. Would you recommend ISS to other people?

a) Yes/ why.....

b) No/ why.....

13. What are the improvements that you think should be done for better service?

14. What do you think is best way to give the direct feedback of the work to the company?

a. E- mail

b. Regular research in certain interval of time

c. Telephone

d. Direct contact with the concerned people

e. Others specify

15. Do you have any suggestion for improvement?