

An evaluation study of quality of service offered by micro and small enterprises in Nairobi: a case study of Shauri Moyo City Council Market

Author: Micheni, Alice K.

Abstract:

Whatever a business entity does or doesn't do has a quality dimension and direct or indirect impact on quality of services provided and also on customer satisfaction. This consequently affects repeat purchases and has a direct relationship with the business success through increased customer retention, increased market share, increased revenue and finally increased profits. Trends in business operations with regard to concept of quality show that with changing customer and business demands, businesses are being driven to manage themselves more efficiently and to look more closely at service delivery. Service is deemed worthy of repeat purchase and recommendation to friends if it meets customer specifications. Quality that really counts is in the eye of the customer. Aiming at quality therefore is aiming at the best possible satisfaction of customer needs and requirements. In the current competitive marketplace where products of equally acceptable quality are on sale, businesses are differentiating themselves more on quality of service than on quality of products or people skills and experience. This study aims at evaluating the quality of service offered by Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) with the eventual aim of prescribing intervention mechanisms for the area of study and MSEs in general. The study focuses on Shauri Moyo (Burma) market in Nairobi's Eastlands region. The market has been closed twice since its opening in 1962, the latest being in April 2004 due to its filthy state. It was given a facelift and reopened by the Minister for Local Government end May 2004. Various models of service quality have been studied and the SERVQUAL model adopted for application in this study. Characteristics of services were studied in order to understand the special emphasis that should be paid to service provision as opposed to the traditional view of product quality. Literature on standards of measuring service quality was shared with all respondent SME operators to serve as reference material for further improvement of service quality in their business operations through repositioning their approach to customers. A descriptive research design was adopted and questionnaires administered to business operators and customers to collect quantitative data. Qualitative data was also collected through observation method. All operating stalls formed the population of study, and an appropriate sample was obtained through simple random sampling after stratifying the population by type of gender to ensure representation of both genders in the study. Data was analysed by modern statistical methods and applications. Data has been presented by use of various types of charts, and descriptive statistics. The study has established that quality service is offered in the market, particularly in view of the facelift given to the entire market recently by the local authority.