Customer's Assessment of Online Laundry Service

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Abstract: This preliminary study emphasizes on Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSME) in laundry service area which focus on the customer's assessment of online laundry service. MSME is the most business sector that survive in the midst of economic crisis in Indonesia. There were many studies in MSME conducted in area of customer, service, service quality, or correlation between them. Researches among customer assessment on service quality gain quite much interest for decades. However, it was quite few of researches that study in the particular service area such as laundry service especially online laundry service. So that researcher proposed this preliminary study. Researcher wants to gain the deeper information and understanding of customer's mind about the customer's assessment of online laundry service, by using one-on-one interview as the qualitative method research approach. The preliminary study result shows that the customers who is using the online laundry service show the very positive feedback towards it, as long as the online laundry service provider maintain their quality, and customer will be loyal to them and trust them and willing to spread the good news about the online laundry service they are using to their society.

Key words: e-commerce, customers' assessment, service quality, laundry service

INTRODUCTION

MSME is a business sector that survive in the middle of economic crisis in Indonesia, while some big companies out of business and need to dismissed most of their employees. MSME could not have been negligible for the present or the future, because this sector can be counted on to spur high economic growth and enhance community participation in the national development activities, region, up to the village level.

Services dominate the economy in most nations. It is growing rapidly and can be presented by its contribution to GDP. The world most service-dominate economy is Cayman Island: Small, British-administered island in the western Caribbean, known for tourism and offshore financial and insurance service contribute 95 % to their GDP's country. Since the contributions of MSME to GDP are so great, so it made it very influential in the country's economic growth, MSME are considered necessary to do the revolution and enhance competitiveness to be able to enter the global market. [1]

Revolutions in the globalization era including digital economy era in which there is a term of "information superhighway" or known as internet. Internet becomes a big revolution in the business aspect which brought changes in the pattern and business performance. Communication between companies or towards its customer becomes increasingly easy and the flow of information is fast, real-time, complete, and update, because the Internet is accessible 24 hours 7 days, no day off [2]. Along with the growth spurts of internet in all aspects of human lives, new business model called online business replaced the traditional business where people have to present physically at a business location in order to satisfy their needs and wants. Accordingly, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand were found to be the world's top market with the highest online shopping penetration rate [3].

The online business model does not only transform how customers purchase products and services, but also how business operates. In banking industry for instance, people no longer have to queue at the banks to withdraw cash, update bank statements or pay loans. Instead most

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of services offered by the banks can now be reached through online banking system. In smaller industry such as laundry service business, companies such as IBM have launched smart laundry machines at colleges to fit the needs of hectic students' lifestyle. Students only have to visit a website to find out when a washing machine will be available and they can select soap and fabric softener dispensing function too. A notification e-mail will be sent to the students when the load is done and laundry charges will be deducted from the students' ID cards [4].

In Indonesia, however, an online laundry service takes a different form. Normally, customers have to visit a laundry service provider, weigh their dirty laundry, pay the respective charges and collect cleaned laundry in the following few days. Now, laundry service providers came up with a new solution where customers only have to contact them through laundry apps or any communication apps so that the laundry service provider can fetch the dirty laundry and return it whenever and wherever the customer request after being washed.

There were many studies conducted in area of customer, service, service quality, or correlation between them [5-8]. The research on service quality spread from offline to online service or known as e-service [9-15]. The research was also going deeper to the particular service like laundry service area. Earlier in 2017 there was research conducted in Laundry service in hospital regarding the patients and staffs satisfaction on linen being supplied by the center. It was certain that the staffs and patients were satisfied by the linen provided by the center but the cost of the laundry center facility set up in hospital were very expensive [16]. Meanwhile in 2016, there is a research regarding laundry service in other industry like hotel, to identify the critical risk during the laundry process among hotel laundry workers in Terengganu, Malaysia. Surely the possibility of finger caught into the flatwork iron was the most critical risk among other risks during laundry process such as the hazardous material and chemical [17].

From literature above it can be seen that customer assessment in services growing much more interesting to be researched to recently. Nevertheless, none of these researches study about online laundry service that focus on Business to Customer (B2C) instead of (B2B), so that researcher wants to do this preliminary study with the purpose of understanding the customer assessment of using online laundry service. Method that will be used to gain the customer assessment is through interviews as the qualitative method research approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service and Service Quality

The word service originally was associated with the work of servants did to their master. Eventually, the term of service change in term of helping, serving, or benefiting of another. In marketing, service defines as an act, performance, or efforts. Service also can be emphasized as exchanging money, time, and efforts to get the expected value or desired results [1].

There is a term quality that following the service. Service quality has been found to be an important component for establishing and maintaining the customers. Quality has generally been defined by as overall impression of superiority or inferiority of organization and its services [18]. The most common service quality definition provided by Zeithaml [19] is "the consumer's judgment about the overall excellence or superiority of service".

In 1985, A. parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard Berry [20] identify six gaps in service which are the knowledge gap, the policy gap, the delivery gap, the communications gap, which have a direct relationship with the service company; the perception gap, and the service quality gap, which have a direct relation to customer. In 1990, A. parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard Berry [21] develop their study about delivering service quality by balancing the customer perception and expectation. They develop steps for closing the service quality gap, and Lovelock [1] explained clearly about it. The knowledge gap can be closed by educating the management about what customer expected, for example: having a direct interaction between customers and management, having a direct communication by interviewing the customers what they actually need and expected from the service. [1,20]

Internet and Online Service

The Internet began in the 1960s as an experimental connection between computers at Stanford University, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Utah, together with the Department of Defense [22]. Internet became a major revolution in business that has changed the pattern and business performance. Communication between companies becomes easier and the flow of information is fast, actual, complete and up to date, because it accessible 24 hours 7 days without a day off [2]. Big companies as well as MSMEs both take advantages of the internet to enhance the company performance, internal, external, between companies, as well as customer services. Alberto and Fernando [23] explained that the internet provides many positive

impacts for MSMEs including increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs to compete with larger companies equivalently. Internet allows MSMEs in an effective, comprehensive, and cheap way to do marketing and competes with larger companies [24].

There were Ardjouman [25] conducts research about the factors that influence SMEs to adopt ICT but this time is in Abidjan city of Cote d'Ivoire, Africa. There were also Srinivas Nowduri and Shafi Al-Dossary DBA [26] conduct SMEs adopting ICT to enhance the management system in SMEs. Srinivas [26] and Ardjouman [25] both found that ICT can be a valid, effective, and innovative tool for sustainability of SMEs development [25,26]. Those researches show similarity that there was definitely positive impact of using ICT and internet in sustainability of MSME. The digital age now has utilized the Internet as a bridge that is very effective and efficient. Highly visible where simplification occurs in the presence of the Internet, especially regarding time and scope. It allows people to manage the time be more effective and efficient. It also allows to wider the coverage area, unhindered by national borders.

Customer Retention and Loyalty

Customer retention can be described as repetition in purchasing on service or goods [27]; or the continuity of the business relations between the customer and company [28]. Lin and Wu [29] argue the vital of marketing research is that the effects of relationships and quality on customer retention [30].

Meanwhile, customer loyalty can be described as the willingness of customer to maintain or commit their relationship with the company and further referring it to colleagues [27]. There are two kinds of customer loyalty: one is based on behavior means that the willingness of customer to repurchase and continue relationships with the company; and other based on attitude means that emotional attachment and advocacy of customers toward the company [30,31].

Service Quality and Purchase Intention

There were many studies conducted in area of customer (i.e. customer perception, customer satisfaction, customer behavioral intention, customer needs, and etc.), service quality (offline service or online service), or correlation between them. Woodside [8] proposed the first model of linking service quality, customer satisfaction, and purchase intentions. Bitner [5] investigated about customer satisfaction and service quality of 145 travellers at an international airport. Cronin and Taylor [6] have the same proposed research as Woodside [8] but in multi industries: banking, pest control, dry cleaning and fast food. Taylor

and Baker [7] proposed the same research as Cronin and Taylor [6] but in different service industries: health care, amusement park, airlines, and communications service. It appears that Woodside [8], Cronin and Taylor [6], and Taylor and Baker [7] have the same result is that satisfaction is moderating the service quality and purchase intentions (service quality → customer satisfaction → purchase intentions). Meanwhile Bitner [5] found that service quality was moderating the relationship between service quality and purchase intentions (customer satisfaction → service quality → purchase intentions).

In online shopping studies there were Yang and Jun [9] and Lee and Lin [10] conducted studies about e-service quality dimensions in terms of internet purchaser and non-purchaser perspectives [9] and other in term of customer satisfaction of online bookstores then related to customer purchase intention [10]. E-quality service dimensions that Yang and Jun [9] proposed for internet purchaser are reliability, access, ease of use, personalization, security, and credibility; for internet non-purchaser are security, responsiveness, ease of use, reliability, availability, personalization, and access. Meanwhile, e-service quality dimension that Lee and Lin [10] proposed are website design, reliability, responsiveness, trust, and personalization. Both of them used SERVQUAL model to measure the customer perception on service quality. Both arrived at the same result that e-service quality dimension affect the costumer [10], even non-costumer e-service which then related to customer purchase intention (service quality → customer satisfaction → purchase intentions). This result support Woodside [8], Cronin and Taylor [6], and Taylor and Baker [7] results.

Yang, Jun, and Peterson [11] studied about measuring customer perceived in online service quality in Bank industry. They used mix method: an exploratory and confirmatory study. Exploratory study identified the key dimensions about customer review of their online service experience as the hypothesis. The confirmatory study is to test that hypothesis. In the end they found that responsiveness, reliability, product portfolio, and ease are the most important key dimensions for both overall service quality and satisfaction [11].

Similarly, Al-hawari and Ward's [12] and Nochai siblings [15] studied about the link between e-service quality and customer satisfaction in banking area. Both of them found that e-service quality also affected customer satisfaction and bank profitability [15,30] and customer satisfaction is mediating between e-service quality and financial performance (e-

service quality → customer satisfaction → financial performance) [12]. This Al-Hawari and Ward's [12] finding is support Woodside [8], Cronin and Taylor [6], and Taylor and Baker [7] that customer satisfaction was the mediator.

All of them used the quantitative approach to measure customer's satisfaction. Instead of measuring customer's satisfaction, this preliminary study focuses on gaining the customer assessment and perceptions in customers mind towards the new innovation service which is online laundry service. So that, researcher and the laundry service business player will know that this innovation of service can be sustainable to the future.

Laundry Service in Other Industry

Since 9 years ago in 2008, there was a research conducted in particular area such as laundry service with respect to the effectiveness of laundry service operation and maintaining the quality while reducing the cost. This study was conducted in a Public hospital in Colombia. They proposed the mixed-integer linier programming model as a tool to find the new shift and routing design for dirty linen collection. This model could find that saving the distance for dirty linen collection can reduce the time delay between dirty linen collection and clean linen distribution. [32]

In 2016 there is a research regarding laundry service in particular industry like hotel, to identify the critical risk during the laundry process among hotel laundry workers in Terengganu, Malaysia, by using Semi-Quantitative Risk Management Matrix. Surely the possibility of finger caught into the flatwork iron was the most critical risk among other risks during laundry process such as the hazardous material and chemical. They believe that this study can help the employer be more proactive for the workers safety and healthiness. [17]

Meanwhile in 2017, there was research conducted regarding laundry service in other area like healthcare industry such as hospital with the goal is to measure the patients and staffs satisfaction on linen being supplied by the center to the acute care surgical center. They set up the center facility of laundry service inside the hospital with the high cost and researched it for 2 years (2014 – 2016). The amount of linen received by the laundry was significantly increased over the years. The questioners were distributed toward the staffs and patients, and it was certain that the staffs and patients were satisfied by the linen provided by the center but the cost of the laundry center facility set up in hospital were very expensive. [16]

However there is no research that mentioned online laundry service despite the fact that understanding customer assessment is critical because we can extend the result to Business to Business (B2B) in other industries such as healthcare and hospitality industries. Therefore the hospital and hotel can focus on their core business activities. The next chapter explains the methodology used in this study.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of qualitative research design considers philosophies both ontology and epistemology issue. Essentially, ontology is reality; epistemology is the relationship between the researcher and the reality; and methodology is the technique used by researcher to discover the reality [33]. The position of this research related to ontology and epistemology is that researcher believes that the reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. This study follow the philosophy of interpretivism, because researcher focus on specific topic and wants to know the differences in people's mind. Researcher will also involve in the study, and will use small number of participants.

This study used qualitative method approach because the researcher wants to study the reality of laundry service from customer perception and observation; researcher wants to understand and gain deeper information about online laundry service in term of understanding the service quality and customers perceptions. This method allows researcher to understand, gain deeper information, and knows inside customer's mind by interviewing them, nor send out and instrument for individual to complete because researcher herself is the key instrument [34]. However, this method requires more time to gather the data and perform the analysis.

Criterion sampling type used in this study. Researcher set several criteria to determine the respondent such as age minimum 18 years old; have a knowedge about internet or mobile chat apps such as WhatsApp and Line; have an experience on offline and online laundry service. Actual number of participants is determined by data saturation. Interview conducted as one-on-one interview for this research. One on one interview is chosen because the researcher can see the customer's face by her own naked eyes; and researcher can feel the person's feel directly through their voice and faces. Both can help researcher knows whether the customers speak the truth or lies. Researcher as a key instrument to gather data by interviewing participants. Researcher will interview each of participants by semi-structured interview question. The role of researcher to make neutral is to bracketing researcher's perception to the participants being interviewed.

Thematic Analysis was used for this study. Thematic Analysis (TA) first used as a method in 1970 but its inconsistency used. In 1998, Boyatzis [35] develop a coding and theme development and published it in a book. Though the developmental history of TA is less coherent but it is commonly used for qualitative research analysis [36]. Thematic Analysis includes pinpointing, examining, and recording pattern or themes to extract the concepts and meanings from data. Data can be varied such as interview transcribes, field notes, documents, recordings, or even videos. It is commonly used because of its variability and flexibility as its advantage of using TA. There is no specific guidance for TA. It is depend on the type of data, project size, and how themes are analyzed and reported [37].

The trustworthiness of the research is including credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is that the instrument play the right role to find what it designed to be finded. On the other hand, dependability is the consistency of the finding when it used repeatedly. Credibility and dependability in this study will be tested by pilot test. Confirmability is the degree of the neutrality that the finding of the research are shaped based on participants not researcher bias, interest, or motivation [38].

PILOT TEST RESULT

This innovation of online service is quite a new thing in laundry area. As has been known for so long is that people doing their laundry at their home either by hand or machine. Then, as the people getting need of help of their demand, business player tried to think of the mutual benefit solution which help them to do their laundry by offering a laundry service. As the world getting modern, people are getting more busy doing their works, chasing their dreams, especially in the big city area, and they have high mobility, people are getting hard to find the time to send their own laundry to the laundry shops. So then, business player started to make an innovation about online laundry service. When people are busy and have high mobility, they tend to use their leisure time either for resting or spending time with family, or having fun with their friends. So getting help from other people to do such as cleaning the house or laundering their clothes is literally becomes a need.

Making an online laundry service is not a difficult thing in this century, because people can find an internet line anywhere and anytime especially when the technology of mobile phone is qualified. People can grasp the internet by hand. As well as online ordering system, people can just use any online chat apps to order the laundry service, and then the employee of duty will pick their laundry up then send it back to them later on. There is no need to do it by themselves anymore. Just message the laundry service provider and the laundry employee will come to your house and solve the time and clothes problems. It is all about time management.

The theme emerged from the interview explained below:

1. Factor
1.1. Busy (working and school stuffs)
As the first customer being interviewed, she said that the online laundry saving her more time in her busy schedule,

"...Sometimes I am very busy and I just need to manage my time so I just message to him to pick my laundry up..."

The second customer said so,

"My school stuffs and all are already consumed my time..."

Both of the customers are master students and know each other. Their ages are around 25-28 years old. They hardly spend their day at home. Most of their time is they spent it in campus. Home is just a place to sleep.

1.2. Hearing good things about the Laundry
The thing that triggered customer to use online laundry service they are using right now was mostly because people around them talking the good thing about that,

"...my friend the one that told me about that online laundry service provider and its good... good...and my friend the one that patronize me..."

The second customer also agreed. She said she hear from her friends talking about this new laundry service, Laundry X, and said it's good. So she wanted to try it and in fact she needs that kind of laundry service.

2. Needs
2.1.   Time management
As the first customer mentioned that she was using the online Laundry service because she is busy and she needs to manage her time,

"...because of my time management."

2.2.   Saving their leisure time
Meanwhile, the second customer use this online Laundry service is because she wants to save her leisure time for resting,

"...so yeah if there is a service that can help you saving your time why don't you use it? So yeah I am still using it till now. It is better and save your leisure time for resting."

3. Experienced
3.1. It was good
   As the first customer agreed,

"...and I know it is good…"

3.2. Never go to the shop by themselves, yet the Laundry proofed their quality of overall service

Even though the customer didn't go to the shop by themselves and even the first customer never go to the Laundry's shop, yet she never feel doubt about giving it to them because she already saw her friend use the Laundry's service and it is good, even the quality of the service more than she expected. That is the reason why both of the customers still using the Laundry since 8 months ago till now.

4. Effect/Impact
4.1. Purchase retention
   They tend to continue purchase once they proofed that the Laundry service is good. Since, they already become customer since 8 month ago till now.

4.2. Loyalty
   They proofed by themselves that the online Laundry service they are using right now is good. After they proofed it, consciously they will tell other people or friends about it. As the first customer says,

"...and I know it is good so I also recommend it to others."

And the second customer also agreed that after she tried it and proofed it is good, she encourage her friends to use that laundry.

5. Suggestion
5.1. Maintaining the current online ordering system by chat,
   According to the interviews, the first customer said that it was no need to build an app for online laundry service. People can just use online chat to order it, and it still can be called online service because it used internet. In fact, such as WhatsApp, people are using it every day to communicate. People can just message and getting fast response. Even through online chat, customer still gets the main information needed about the Laundry such as: when they will pick it up, when it will be done, the weight of the Laundry they even do it on the spot in front of

customer's eyes, and the price fixed too. So, there is no such thing as deceit even though that online Laundry didn't have a particular online application for their online laundry service. In fact, customer can feel closer to that Laundry, consider those chat through WhatsApp is private. According to her, this was how the ideal online laundry should be.

"...I think it should be like this. We message them, and then they reply us immediately, giving us the information when they will come and etc…. I don't think they need to build an online application. Because I use the WhatsApp every day and it's okay because even with or without the laundry service I already used the WhatsApp every day for communication."

5.2. Making an online application later for better marketing strategy.
   Meanwhile the second customer said if the laundry later becomes bigger and have a chance to build an online application, better they build it. Besides, it shows that the laundry has a better and stronger image, making a customer perception towards them better, and also better for their marketing.

"...If that laundry getting bigger later, I recommend them to build an apps for their laundry service. It can gather more customer and also good marketing for them. That is from my opinion."

Overall, both customers feel satisfied enough of using the online laundry service of Laundry, because the Laundry didn't ignore or set aside the quality of service. As both of customer mentioned that they never once experienced their clothes missing, or misplaced, or discolored. Even their laundry packaging is in nice shape and nice fragrance.

Even though both customers share the similar satisfaction towards the Laundry, they gave different suggestion toward the Laundry. The first customer said that Laundry should continue the way they are doing right now, using online chat because it is easy and comfortable. While the second customer suggested that the Laundry better build an app later on so they have stronger brand image and stronger marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

This preliminary study shows that online laundry service is a good start of innovation regarding the busy and high mobility people either because of their works or school things. The customers who are using the online laundry service

of Laundry show the very positive feedback towards it, as long as the Laundry did not ignore their quality of service. In customers' eyes, as long as the Laundry maintain their quality, customer will be loyal to them and trust them and willing to spread the good news about Laundry to their society.

RECOMMENDATION

Researcher recommends that is better to take informants with different demographic. So that, the researcher can gets various information from different background and perspectives. Researcher also suggest that for the next research regarding the online laundry service, the next researcher better focus on B2B instead of repeating B2C.

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