

Service Quality in Community Based Day Care(PAWE) for Older People in Selangor

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ABSTRACT--*This study was conducted to examine the difference of service quality at rural and urban area of PAWE in Selangor. This study also aimed to identify whether there are difference among expectation score and perception score in service quality of PAWE. This quantitative study was conducted using instrument of Service Quality (SERVQUAL). Sample of study were selected by using purposive sampling which include active elderly aged 60 years or above, can independently take care of themselves and have been using services in PAWE for at least three months. There are 156 respondents involved in this study which are from PAWE Sungai Buloh, PAWE Cheras, PAWE Jenjarom and PAWE Sabak Bernam. Result showed that there is no significant difference between service qualities of PAWE in rural or urban areas. There is negative value gap in all five dimensions of service quality which are tangible, reliability, responsive, assurance and empathy. This study also found that there is gap between expectation and perception scores. This showed that service quality in PAWE is still a way below the expectations of elderly. The research resulted in understanding the importance of service quality in institution to ensure the effectiveness of the services offered. This study has implication in Malaysian social work field especially in aspect of planning and improvement of elderly services, as preparation to be Aged Country by 2030.*

Keywords--*service, quality, day care center and elderly*

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing numbers of senior citizen's phenomenon is a challenge for the government in providing facilities especially the infrastructure, housing, medical and health. Since the senior citizens have various ethnic backgrounds, health levels, economic status and education, the services provided for the group need to be more flexible in meeting their demands (Lee 2002). Realizing this social phenomenon, the government has provided various social services especially for the elderly to ensure the well-being of elderly. The government also created various programs including the provision of social services in the form of formal care that combines health and social care at home; community social services; as well as in-house services to provide social protection and well-being to the senior citizens. The perception of senior citizens when heard about staying in institutions is it is a time of waiting for death, loss of family affection as well as loss of family and community

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relationships (Khadijah 2012). Whereas according to Siti Marziah et al. (2013), older people living in care institutions and away from family members are more prone to chronic loneliness. Older people also feel lonely as children spend more time working and less communication with them (Noraini et al. 2015).

Therefore, to promote the care of the elderly in the community, the Activity Center for Senior Citizens (PAWE) was established in accordance with the National Elderly Action Plan (PTWEN) which advocates for the potential development for senior citizens and provides facilities for community activities. It is an outreach and developmental services for senior citizens. The purpose of PAWE's establishment is to encourage active and productive aging among senior citizens by engaging the local community participation, while avoiding the problem of loneliness and neglect the elderly. The concept of the establishment of PAWE is also to promote the care for senior citizen in the community and to provide social support especially to the elderly living alone in the absence of other family members.

PAWE provides a variety of activities to enable senior citizens interact and participate in various programs with the local community. The services provided at PAWE include providing beneficial programs for senior citizens such as religious and spiritual programs, activities and recreation, therapeutic and rehabilitation, talk on health, health check-up, and training or courses that are suitable for senior citizens such as handicraft and entrepreneurship. Other facility provided at PAWE is mobile van facilities called Senior Citizens Care Unit (UPWE), to bring the elderly for treatment in clinics and hospitals. This facility is useful especially for elderly who is living alone, less fortunate and have no transportation. Besides, facilities for senior citizens to spend time during leisure are also being provided such as table tennis equipment, carom as well as exercise facilities. In this regard, PAWE also serves as a center for healthy, active and productive senior citizens.

The establishment of PAWE also encourages senior citizens to be actively involved in community to prevent loneliness. Loneliness is a serious and familiar problem among senior citizen (Chen et al. 2013). Empty nest syndrome is a depression syndrome that occurs in old age and is common to elderly as the older children leave home for work, got married, further study or travel (Mohd Mustaza 2010; Fatimah Abdullah 2001). According to Population and Housing Census (2010) data, approximately 23% or 538,000 senior citizens suffer from empty nest syndrome. Loneliness has been identified as the main mental health problem for senior citizens which caused by risks such as loss and change in life such as lack of social support, communication as well as interaction and living separately from family (Chalise et al. 2010). Lack of social support, physical inability, and chronic illness could further increase the risk of loneliness among the elderly (Siti Marziah et al. 2013). In line with this social phenomenon, the government has created various programs including the provision of social services in the form of formal care that combines health and social care at home, community social services as well as in-house services to provide social protection and well-being to the senior citizens.

There are 88 PAWEs nationwide including urban and rural areas (Department of Social Welfare 2018). PAWE provides reaching out and development types of services to senior citizens. Activities that being provided such as religious programs, recreation, therapeutic and rehabilitation, talks on health as well as

appropriate training or courses such as information technology and economic development courses. These activities are free of charge and provide opportunities for senior citizens to carry out daily activities with local community in line with the objective to produce productive, active and high quality of life among senior citizens. After 20 years of the establishment of PAWE, it is timely to study in the context of the effectiveness and quality of services for senior citizens. According to Mohamad (2004), quality is a very clear indicator of performance towards each product or services that being produced by an organization to its customers. Service quality measurement is important as it enable to provide specific data that could be used in quality management (Shahin 2006). Therefore, service provider organizations would be able to evaluate, monitor and maintain quality services. According to previous researchers, the quality of service is related to the extent to which the level of service delivered meet with customer requirements (Lewis & Booms 1983; Wisniewski & Donnelly 1996). The service quality could also be defined as the difference between customer expectations and customer perception towards the service they received (Parasuraman et al. 1985; Lewis and Mitchell 1990; Asubonteng et al. 1996). If expectations are greater than performance, then the quality of service is less satisfying and results in customer dissatisfaction. Vice versa, if perceptions are higher than expected, then the service is rated as high quality.

Service quality acts as an important predictor of consumer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al. 1988; Bolton & Drew 1991; Hussain et al. 2015; Azman & Yusrizal Sufardi 2016). Several studies have shown that high levels of customer service would be able to provide positive influence towards customer satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner 1996; Kumar et al. 2008; Ramsaran-Fowdar 2006; Anantha & Huam 2014; Nadiyah Hanani et al. 2015; Azman et al. 2016). This indicates that a good quality of service would be able to satisfy consumers. Besides, Etzioni (1965) and Erlendsson (2002) explained that the effectiveness of an organization is determined by the extent to its ability to achieve its goals. An organization can achieve its goals if the services provided are able to provide maximum satisfaction to the customer (Mohamed Hashim 2010). In other words, a service is rated as effective when it met the needs and expectations of the customer. Therefore, a review of the service quality at PAWE needs to be done to identify the effectiveness of services provided to senior citizens, besides to achieving the goals outlined.

A number of researchers who have conducted studies involving senior citizens in PAWE, such as the study by Mohamad Kamil and Zarina (2019) have studied the contributing factors to the active participation of the elderly in the centres, while a study by Noraida et al. (2019) has examined the well-being of senior citizens participating in PAWE activities and Faizah (2018) studied the level of well-being, social support and the interest tendency of senior citizens towards activities in PAWE. Although research on senior citizens in PAWE has commence in Malaysia but the study is still insufficient. In particular, since the establishment of PAWE in 2001, there is still not enough research being done to study the programs' effectiveness and the quality of services provided at PAWE. Services provided at PAWE such as recreational, exercise, health and religious activities should be studied to determine the effectiveness whether if they can provide positive impact to senior

citizens. Thus, further studies on the quality of senior citizens services are seen as a need in helping Malaysia to be prepared in order to become an aging country in 2030.

Objective

This study was conducted to examine the difference of service quality at rural and urban area of PAWE in Selangor. PAWE Jenjarom and PAWE Sabak Bernam represent rural area, whereas PAWE Sungai Buloh and PAWE Cheras represent urban area. The study also aimed to identify whether there are difference among expectation score and perception score in service quality of PAWE.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

Respondents are selected using purposive sampling. A total of 156 respondents who are using services in community based day care (PAWE) at PAWE in Sungai Buloh, Cheras, Jenjarom and Sabak Bernam were involved in this study.

Instrument

This research was conducted using Service quality instrument or known as SERVQUAL which have been developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988). The questionnaire was chosen as the instrument of this study because of its strong reliability of .94 (Parasuraman et al. 1988). This instrument consists of two parts which is 22 expectation questions and 22 perception questions towards the services. The dimensions of service quality instruments are tangible, responsiveness, reliability, empathy and assurance. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) refer the dimensions of tangibles in terms of physical services aspect, staff, written communication materials, equipment and etc. Whereas, the reliability dimension involves the ability of service provider to perform particular service accurately and can be trusted (Parasuraman et al. 1988). Furthermore, the responsiveness dimension is related to the willingness of the service provider to furnish the service promptly and always ready to assist their customers. Whereas the assurance dimension is about the delivery of a polite and friendly service, so that customers can trust and feel confident with the service. In addition, a safe service environment can also build trust and confidence in customers. Finally, the empathy dimension is related to the service providers' concern attitudes towards customer by providing individual attention and understanding customer needs (Al-Alak 2009). According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), empathy has a positive effect indirectly because customers feel being appreciated and get special attention individually.

Procedure

Data collection was conducted in four different community based day care center (PAWE). PAWE Jenjarom dan PAWE Sabak Bernam represent rural area, whereas PAWE Sungai Buloh and PAWE Cheras represent urban area. Each respondent was asked to complete a set of questionnaires containing demographic information, expectation towards service quality and perception towards service quality in PAWE.

Statistical analysis

Firstly, descriptive analysis was performed to obtain demographic profile of the respondents.

Next, T test was used to identify whether there are difference of service quality between rural and urban area. Based on the SERVQUAL gap analysis method, the perception min score is subtracted from the expectation min score, while the average gap score is calculated by summing the obtained scores and dividing it with the number of questions for each dimension. Then, the total average gap score for each dimension is summed and divided by five, which is referring to five SERVQUAL dimensions to get the total SERVQUAL score. The total score illustrates the quality of service whether positive or negative.

III.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents described the subject of the study involved and the analysis showed there were 156 senior citizens respondents involved and have provided feedback in this study. From the total amount, there were 105 female respondents or 67.3% and 51 male respondents or 32.7%. In this study, PAWE located at urban area covers Cheras and Sungai Buloh while PAWE in rural area covers Sabak Bernam and Jenjarom. The results indicated that 63 or 40.4% were respondents from urban area and 93 or 59.6% were respondents from rural area.

Results of descriptive analysis according to race showed Malay respondents were 102 people or 65.4%, a total of 53 people or 34% were Chinese and only one or only 0.6% Indian respondents. Muslim respondents were 105 or 67.3%, Buddhist respondents were 47 or 30.1%, other religions were 3 or 1.9% and only one or 0.6% was Hindu respondents. In terms of age, 92 respondents (59%) were senior citizens at the age of 60-70 years old, 57 were at 71- 80 years old (36.5%) and only 7 (4.5%) respondents were 81-90 years old. On the other hand, in terms of status, the majority of respondents were married which is 77 peoples (49.4%), followed by 58 people (37.2%) widows, 17 peoples (10.9%) widows and only 4 (2.6%) are single respondents. A total of 104 respondents (66.7%) have 1 to 5 children, 46 peoples (29.5%) have children of age 6 to 10 and the

remaining 6 respondents (3.8%) have no children. Further details of the respondents' demographics are as in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic	Frequency (N: 156)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	51	32.7
Female	105	67.3
Area		
Urban	63	40.4
Rural	93	59.6
Race		
Malay	102	65.4
Chinese	53	34
Indian	1	0.6
Religion		
Islam	105	67.3
Buddha	47	30.1
Hindu	1	0.6
Others	3	1.9
Age		
60-70 years old	92	59
71-80 years old	57	36.5
81-90 years old	7	4.5
Status		
Single	4	2.6
Married	77	49.4
Widower	17	10.9
Widow	58	37.2
Number of children		
1-5 children	104	66.7
6-10 children	46	29.5
None	6	3.8
Resources		
Zakat/religious institutions	6	3.8

State government	6	3.8
Welfare department	1	0.6
Allowance	25	16
None	118	75.6
Income source		
Pension	28	17.9
Business	23	14.7
Children	64	41
Husband	19	12.2
None	22	14.1
Health		
Healthy	78	50
Have disease	78	50

Difference of service quality among rural and urban PAWE

T test was used to identify difference in min score for service quality between rural and urban PAWE areas around Selangor. Table 2 shows that quality of services offered to senior citizens in either urban or rural PAWE areas indicates there is no significant differences [$t(154)=.109, p>.05$]. The results also showed that there was no difference in urban areas scores min ($M=1.08, SP=.62$) and rural areas ($M=0.94, SP=.67$). This clearly indicates that the quality of PAWE services at the urban or rural areas are the same and no issue arises that the services provided by the center in the urban area are much better.

Table 2: Difference of service quality among location of PAWE

	Area	Mean	STD	T value
Service quality	Urban	1.0787	.70541	.109
	Rural	0.9352	.66567	

Note: Significant $*p<0.05, **p<0.01$

Difference between expectation and perception score

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality can be measured by identifying the differences between the scores of perceptions and customer expectations towards the services provided. By using SERVQUAL gap analysis method, the result indicates that there is a difference between expectation and

perception scores. After the average gap score for each dimension being summed up to compute the total SERVQUAL score, the results determined that there is a negative value of -0.993 as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 :Service quality of PAWE based on dimensions of SERVQUAL

Dimensions	Mean for Expectation score (E)	Mean for Perception score (P)	Gap score (P-E)	Average gap score	Total SERVQUAL Score
Tangible				-5.25/4 item = -1.313	
• Have modern equipments	6.19	4.90	-1.29		
• Visually appealing facilities	6.15	4.85	-1.3		
• Staff with neat appearance	5.99	4.70	-1.29		
• visually appealing service materials	5.93	4.56	-1.37		
	Average: 6.15	Average: 4.75	Total: -5.25		
Reliability				-5.32/5 item = -1.064	
• Perform the what is being promise within time	6.32	5.42	-0.9		
• Pay attention to problem solving	6.52	5.49	-1.03		
• Perform the service right the first time	5.97	4.74	-1.23		
• provide the	6.4	5.47	-0.93		

service within the promised time					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insist on error free records 	5.92	4.69	-1.23		
	Average 6.23	Average: 5.16	Total: -5.32		
Responsiveness				-2.78/4 item = - 0.695	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell the customers exactly when services will be performed 	6.55	6.17	-0.38		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give prompt service to customers. 	6.67	5.87	-0.8		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always be willing to help customers 	6.47	5.67	-0.8		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> never be too busy to respond to customers' requests. 	6.23	5.43	-0.8		
	Average: 6.48	Average: 5.78	Total: -2.78		
Assurance				-3.46/4 item = - 0.865	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour of employees will instil confidence in customers 	6.66	5.94	-0.72		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel safe in transactions 	6.72	6.08	-0.64		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees consistently 	6.79	6.2	-0.59		

courteous with customers.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees have the knowledge to answer customers' questions 	6.63	5.12	-1.51		
	Average: 6.70	Average: 5.83	Total: -3.46		
Empathy				-5.14/5 item = -1.028	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institution give customers individual attention 	6.31	5.24	-1.07		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institution have operating hours convenient to all customers. 	6.63	6.12	-0.51		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have employees who give customers personal service 	6.37	5.01	-1.36		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institution have customers' best interest at heart. 	6.54	5.53	-1.01		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> employees of understand the specific needs of their customers 	6.45	5.26	-1.19		
	Average: 6.46	Average: 5.43	Total: -5.14		
			Total Average Gap Score: -4.965		
			Total SERVQUAL score : -4.965 / 5 dimensi = -0.993		

According to Parasuraman et al. (1991) and Wisniewski & Donnelly (1996), negative values on the average gap score indicated that service quality levels are below consumer expectations, while values in zero digit and positive values demonstrate equal levels of service equal to customers' expectations or exceed the expectations. Therefore, the study concluded that the negative value of the total SERVQUAL score demonstrates that the

level of service quality in PAWE is still below the senior citizens expectations. This indicates that there is a difference in the expectations and perceptions of senior citizens as per study conducted by Chew (2013), which asserted that each consumer has different expectations and perceptions on service quality.

Based on Table 3, the results show that there is a negative score gap for all five dimensions of SERVQUAL namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. This also indicates that respondents' expectations on the service quality in PAWE were not met. The reliability dimension shows the highest gap score of -5.32 while the responsive dimension shows the lowest gap score of -2.78. This reveals that the most important aspect of determining the quality of service at PAWE is the responsiveness dimensions such as always being willing to help and provide the best service. While the most important aspect to be improved in order to increase service quality at PAWE is reliability dimension, such as paying close attention to solving problems and striving to avoid mistakes. The aspect of reliability is important because customers will choose to deal with organizations that are always kept their promises and reliable (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

For each item in the dimension, the highest min for expectation was on the assurance dimension (M=6.79), on the item 'feeling safe' in PAWE. The highest min for perception was also on the assurance dimension (M=6.2), that is on the 'feeling safe' item. This shows that majority of senior citizens expect secure surrounding in PAWE. While the lowest mean for expectation was on the reliability dimension (M=5.92), on the item 'insist on error free records'. This shows that senior citizens do not set high expectations for PAWE not making any errors. While the lowest mean of perception was on the tangible dimension (M=4.56), on the item 'service-related material in PAWE is interesting'. This indicates that the materials and services at PAWE are less satisfactory and less attractive from the view of senior citizens.

The findings of this research are in line with the study by Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2010) who studied the quality of public service in Mauritius and found that all the SERVQUAL dimensions showed a negative gaps score with the reliability dimension having the highest gap score. The large gap score on the dimension indicates that these dimensions need to be taken into account in order to improve service quality. This is because the reliability dimension reflects the ability of service providers to perform particular service accurately and being reliable (Parasuraman et al. 1988). Whereas Wisniewski's (2001) that studied the Scottish public service quality found that gap score analysis for tangibles and reliability dimensions have a negative gap score. On the other hand, the responsive and assurance dimensions show a positive gap score, while the other dimensions have a negative gap score. This indicates that the service provider needs to pay more attention on the tangibles, empathy and reliability dimensions to improve public service quality.

Once the perception min score is subtracted from the expected min score, the average gap score is calculated by summing it up and dividing it with the number of questions for each dimension. Then the total average gap score for each dimension is summed and divided by five, which referring to the five SERVQUAL dimensions to get the total SERVQUAL score. The results of this analysis show that there is a difference between the expectation and perception score of -0.993. These negative values indicate that the level of service

quality at PAWE is below customer expectations and fails to meet customer service expectations in all dimensions.

The largest gap score is at the reliability level of -5.32. As such, this dimension is a starting point for improvement and needs to be given more attention to improving the quality of services at PAWE. Whereas the lowest gap score is the responsive dimension with total of -2.78. This indicates that there is not much difference in perception and expectation of respondents in terms of service guarantees in PAWE. For each item in the dimension, the highest min for expectation is on the guarantee dimension (M=6.79), that is on the item of 'feeling safe in PAWE'. The highest min for perception is also on the assurance dimension (M=6.2), that is on the item of 'feeling safe in PAWE'. This shows that the majority of senior citizens expect security assurance when in PAWE. Meanwhile, the lowest mean for expectation is on the reliability dimension (M=5.92), that is on the item 'insist on error free records'. This indicates that senior citizens do not set high expectations for PAWE not to make any mistakes. While, the lowest min of perception is on the tangibles dimension of (M=4.56), that is on the item of 'service-related material in PAWE is interesting'. This indicates that the materials and services at PAWE are less satisfactory and less attractive from the senior citizens point of view.

Overall, the quality of service at PAWE is still at below the expectations of senior citizens, and has not been able to meet all of these expectations. There is a difference between the perception and expectation scores of -0.993. In addition, the study found that the highest gap score between expectations and perceptions are on the reliability dimension. Therefore, these dimensions need to be prioritized and can be the starting point for improvements in delivering the service. According to Nurhayati et al. (2017), the study proposes that program should be planning activities that can foster closer relationships between the elderly and children or their beneficiaries. This is not only important to ensure the goals of the services are met, but to ensure the elderly receive support they need in PAWE as well as enhance the psychological well-being of the elderly.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is no significant difference in the quality of services based on the location of PAWE whether it is in urban or rural areas. This indicates that senior citizens in both urban and rural areas of PAWE receive similar services in at the center. This study also found that the quality of service at PAWE was below the senior citizens expectations. This means that the services provided at PAWE still haven't met the expectations of senior citizens. This statement is supported by the difference between the perception scores and the elderly expectations of PAWE's service quality, which shows negative values. The research findings also found that the highest expectation and perception gap score is in reliability dimension. Therefore, these dimensions should be given priority in drafting plans for service delivery to the senior citizens. Information about these service quality gaps is important and can help service providers make an assessment of the services offered.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute in authorities' efforts to provide quality services and to meet the needs of senior citizens. Existing services and assistance need to be reviewed and improved to be more holistic in meeting the specific needs of the elderly. As we know, due to the increasing number of senior citizens, providing the best services for the well-being of the elderly is a global challenge must be faced by most developed and developing countries. Therefore, domestic studies in the related countries about social issues and needs of senior citizens are essential to ensure the welfare and well-being of the elderly in Malaysia.

V. LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION

This study is restricted to senior citizens at the age of 60 years old only. The quality of service is evaluated based on the senior citizens' experiences who have been receiving services at PAWE for at least 3 months. As this study only examined the quality of services in the 4 PAWEs involved, the results of this study could not be generalized to all senior citizens that are seeking services in other PAWEs throughout Malaysia. Therefore, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted by using a mix-method approach to further study the effectiveness and services of PAWE.

The study suggested that research on programs and services provided at PAWE must be conducted in need of assessment method to identify the types of services and programs needed by senior citizens in PAWE. This is a necessity because consumer opinions are important and can serve as a benchmark for services offered as a means of fulfilling consumer needs (Nor Helme 2015). In addition, researchers recommend that PAWE cooperate with health institutions, especially Rehabilitation Hospitals to provide Geriatric Rehabilitation (H-Care UKM) services to senior citizens who have neurological and orthopedic illness for those who have the potential to return to their functional level. In addition, supportive equipment such as wheelchairs, walking sticks, crutches and walking frames could be provided for rehabilitation purposes and facilitate mobility of the elderly. The provision of this service is in line with DWEN, which encourages senior citizen to lead productive and active aging.

This study has implications for various stakeholders' understanding towards the quality of services at PAWE. The study also highlights the importance of the social workers' roles in planning, coordinating and monitoring activities and programs that being provided at PAWE. Collaboration between social workers and supervisors and assistant supervisors at PAWE in coordinating programs and activities based on PAWE guidelines should be established in order to enhance the service quality at PAWE. Indirectly, suitable programs that have been organized to meet the needs of senior citizens will encourage the elderly to be actively involved in PAWE and hence will promote productive aging. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide implications to the existing service improvement plans to ensure a more holistic and efficient service being delivered to senior citizens.

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