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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON OPERATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN CALL CENTERS

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As more and more companies focus on CRM (customer relationship management), call centers which are at the forefront of the customer-company relationship, are being used as a core channel for CRM activities. A call center can be understood as either a strategic customer marketing center which provides solutions for customer needs as well as answers questions about the products and services, or customer communication center that plays key roles in executing CRM strategies. With the development of information and communication technology, the traditional call center is recently evolving into an intelligent IP contact center, where customer contact and information exchange is enabled by concurrently using diverse media such as telephone, Web, e-mail, chat, voice over IP, and ultimately video conversation. Because call centers handle over 70% of all customer-company interactions in many companies, customer satisfaction with call center service is crucial for the success of a company. Consequently, companies should periodically assess how customers feel about the quality of service of their call center and should reflect the information on the call center operations. In order to provide high quality of service and achieve customer satisfaction, call center is being managed and monitored through a number of key performance indicators (KPIs). The problem here is that these KPIs are not based on the theoretical examination and empirical evidence. Thus, there is a need to identify what KPIs are really associated with customer satisfaction in call centers. The purpose of this study is to investigate the operational determinants affecting customer satisfaction in the call centers. For this purpose, we have extracted from the literature 10 key performance indicators: average speed of answer, average time in queue, percentage of calls closed on first contact, average abandonment rate, average talk time, adherence to schedule, average after call work time, percentage of calls blocked, employment turnover rate and service level. From the statistical analysis performed we could confirm that the percentage of calls blocked, average speed of answer and service level are the critical factors of determining customer satisfaction. It is expected that the results of this study can help call center managers to improve their call center operations.

Keywords: e-CRM, Call Center, Key Performance Indicators, Caller Satisfaction