

MANAGING SUSTAINABILITY AT LOGISTICS SERVICE PROVIDER THROUGH SERVICE QUALITY: COMPANY'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract — In the era of globalization, competition among logistical transport companies is tight and each company is required to have the right strategy to survive. Customer satisfaction is one of the most important factors in the success of a logistics company, but in the process of forming customer satisfaction, the logistics company must have a strong strategy by implementing aspects of service quality. This study aims to provide an overview of how logistics transportation companies maximize service for customers by linking corporate strategy with service quality aspects. This research uses a qualitative exploration approach with semi-structural interview methods, observation, and document analysis. The results showed that PT. Berkat Aci Mulia formed its strategy by considering the evaluation and expectations of its customers which could then be related to four aspects of service quality namely; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. Good quality service-based and provided to customers can make PT. Berkat Aci Mulia maintains business amid intense competition with its competitors

Keywords: *service orientation, service quality, customer satisfaction*

Abstrak — Di era globalisasi, persaingan antar perusahaan transportasi logistik semakin ketat dan setiap perusahaan dituntut untuk dapat memiliki strategi yang tepat agar dapat bertahan. Kepuasan pelanggan adalah salah satu faktor terpenting dalam keberhasilan perusahaan logistik, tetapi dalam proses pembentukan kepuasan pelanggan, perusahaan logistik harus memiliki strategi yang kuat dengan menerapkan aspek kualitas layanan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan gambaran tentang bagaimana perusahaan transportasi logistik dalam memaksimalkan layanan bagi para customer dengan menghubungkan strategi perusahaan dengan aspek service quality. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan eksplorasi kualitatif dengan metode wawancara semi struktural, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa PT. Berkat Aci Mulia membentuk strateginya dengan mempertimbangkan evaluasi dan ekspektasi dari para pelanggan yang kemudian dapat dikaitkan dengan empat aspek service quality yaitu; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. Kualitas layanan yang baik yang berbasis dan diberikan pada pelanggan dapat membuat PT. Berkat Aci Mulia mempertahankan bisnis di tengah persaingan yang ketat dengan para pesaingnya.

Kata kunci: orientasi layanan, kualitas layanan, kepuasan pelanggan

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, competition between companies is increasingly stringent and very competitive, especially for logistics transportation services companies. More geographically dispersed customers demand high quality products or services but at a lower or fixed price and shorter delivery times (Stock, Greis, & Kasarda, 1998). Therefore companies are required to be able to understand customer needs and expectations and ensure that the services provided by the company are able to make customers satisfied (Kavaliauskiene, Aranskis, & Litvinenko, 2014).

According to Huang & Huang (2012) the most important part of every business sector related to services is the customer. All activities carried out by service companies must be oriented precisely to the customer, which is then evaluated by customers who feel the benefits by comparing expectations with perceived service products and forming a customer satisfaction, while the manifestation of expectations depends on several factors in the environment around the customer such as psychological, cultural, and social factors that influence the formation of these expectations.

Customer satisfaction, service quality, and customer retention have become global issues that affect all organizations. According to the results of a survey released by the American Express Global Customer Service Barometer (2010) of 12,000 customers worldwide, 60 percent of respondents rated excellent customer service as making these customers willing to give their money. Another survey conducted by InfoQuest of 20000 customers in 40 countries on "Growth Strategies International (GSI)" statistical analysis of customer satisfaction data states that highly satisfied customers contribute 2.6 times more revenue to companies compared to satisfied customers, highly satisfied customers contributed 17 times more revenue than dissatisfied customers, while dissatisfied customers reduced revenue at a rate equivalent to 1.8 times the contribution of satisfied customers to the business (Coldwell, 2001).

This has an impact on the company concerned, where satisfied customers have great potential to be able to share their experiences with others and become regular customers, just as dissatisfied customers have greater potential to tell many people about unsatisfactory experiences those who can ultimately give the company a bad image in the eyes of others, do not continue to purchase or use services the next time, and complain about the company to the point that it can result in compensation that can be very detrimental to the company itself (Zairi, 2000). However, according to Voss, et.al (2005) providing perfect logistic performance is not an easy thing. During the transportation process the logistic service provider industry especially PT. Berkas Aci Mulia as the object of this research, experienced internal (fleet damaged and human error) and external problems (bad travel condition and uneven strict regulation).

Fleet damaged that suddenly happened such as trucks that experienced problems in spare parts and human error such as some drivers that sometimes steal the time off by ignoring minor damage to the vehicle before departing, then deliberately accumulate damage to the vehicle so that the vehicle can be repaired in a long time or truck driver negligence that not lock the door while stopping to rest then someone can have ability to steal the goods from the truck and makes a considerable loss for the company. While bad travel conditions can happen when there is damage due to uncontrolled weather or natural disasters caused by bad weather such as landslide and road damaged that slow down the delivery time of goods. Another obstacles are increase in standard logistic service cost and uneven strict regulation such as dimension or size of the fleets, if it violates it will be followed up on the spot, such as welding the tub becomes short so the driver must leave customer goods on the road, whereas for some of logistic companies that have connections with the government can be free to transport without applicable standard rules.

These kinds of obstacles can hamper the activity of shipping goods so the goods cannot arrive under the agreed duration with the customer. This will be a threat to the company because customers can switch to using the services of other companies or ask for compensation that can harm the company itself. Therefore, logistics companies, especially trucking, must be able to take strategic steps that can overcome or prevent this from happening. One form of strategy that can be carried out by logistics companies is logistic service quality. Logistics service quality is the development of service quality used by logistics companies to be able to try to meet the most prominent model consist of 5 key factors to get customer satisfaction consisting of tangibles, reliability,

responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1985). This model is claimed to be a general model that can be applied in various contexts of service quality (Yuen & Thai, 2015).

Service quality has been developing along with the times. According to Ladhari (2009), service quality have many variation point of view that depending on the conditions occur. Therefore, this research will find out about how service quality aspects can be related to the company's strategy made by PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia in order to survive in the intense competition between similar businesses. While service quality itself can be formed based on the midpoint between customer expectation and customer evaluation (Cacerez et al., 2007). When service quality and customer needs can relate well, the company will experience a positive impact on the company's performance in a long term.

This study aims to to find out more deeply about the strategies carried out by a logistics transportation to survive in the middle of intense competition with the competitor using service quality that has related to customer satisfaction. There are some mini-research question that will be used to support this research:

1. How does PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia provide and manage their service to the customers?
2. How can the aspects of service quality have linked to the strategy carried out by PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia in order to solve the problems (internal and external) that happened in the company?
3. How about the results obtained from applying those strategies to the firm performance in a long-term based on company perspective?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach because this research will examine certain events in a company by looking at facts that are associated with relevant theories to be able to analyze more deeply and produce detailed information in-depth and can be justified. The interpretive paradigm is also used in this study because based on the research question outlined earlier, this study wants to understand and explain the events that occur based on the views of people directly involved in the situation.

Data collection methods used consisted of (1) interviews conducted with three employees from three different divisions at PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia, there are; Mr. N (Confidant), Mr. S (Operational Director), and Mr. Y (Marketing Manager), (2) observation by visiting the location of the branch office and workshop of PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia in Semarang, Central Java, (3) document analysis sourced from the document given by Mr. N about company overview and theory obtained from several journals and articles to support this study process.

RESULT

In this study, PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia, it has provided facilities and services that lead to aspects of service quality. PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia, there are 160 fleet units with 87 units of tubs and box assets ready to be used for the needs and desires of customers and their conditions are always guaranteed by servicing regularly and replacing some fleets that have not been able to work optimally with new fleets to optimize their use. This is supported by statements issued by Mr. Y as Marketing Manager and Mr. S as Operations Director. PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia, it is estimated that assets are very important to support service operations because if something happens during the process, the company can resolve it directly to prevent a longer time delay.

PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia always asks the customers for feedback to be used as an evaluation for the company, both in terms of timeliness, the security of goods sent, as well as several other shortcomings and advantages. For PT. Berkhat Aci Mulia, customer satisfaction is the main thing, because, with satisfaction, customers can be more trusting

and happy to use the company's services in the future or can bring another customer to use the services. With the feedback given, the company has experienced an increase in both performance and facilities that have a positive impact on the company going forward.

Mr. Y also said that, PT. Berkat Aci Mulia built their relationship with the customers by giving several offers at the beginning before cooperating and the company was willing to listen to the needs or obstacles faced by customers related to payments, such as offering payment relief with installment methods in accordance with the capabilities of the customers or discuss the costs at the beginning of the collaboration to find the best way that is not to the detriment of both parties. Mr. S also added, for the services provided, PT. Berkat Aci Mulia provide several fleet options and prices that can be used according to customer needs but still consider the safety standards and applicable rules. Some procedures conducted by PT. Berkat Aci Mulia before shipping goods from the customer to the destination is checked the quantity and condition of the goods and the vehicle that will be used, to ensure everything is going well and safely arrived at destination.

There are several ways that used by PT. Berkat Aci Mulia to make sure the transportation process is going well and safety, the first way is do the fleet inspection by ensure the driver that the fleet and the GPS used to shipping the goods have no damage, so it can minimize the problem that would happen on the way. This is one of the company's strategies in ensuring that each fleet can be ensured to resume operations immediately and meet the needs of every customer in a timely and monitored manner. For the second way, provide information accurately by ensures to customers that they will provide accurate information related to the tracking process carried out by the company on the ongoing fleet. Tracking is done as much as 3 (three) times a day via GPS and communication by telephone with the driver to ask the situation during the trip. Therefore, after the company tracks the fleet, but reverses the fleet is not at the predicted point, the company will ask the driver about the reason behind that and will convey the information to the customer along with the estimates provided by the company, so the customers can feel the goods are under good and safe guidance until the destination.

DISCUSSION

In managing the strategy, transportation logistic provider company have customer-oriented focus, this is because there is a positive relationship between the quality of logistics services and customer satisfaction (Mentzer, Flint, & Hult, 2001), in other words, if the services provided by a logistics service provider can provide what is needed by the customer well, the customer will feel satisfied with the logistic service provider company and vice versa. Meanwhile, according to Goh and Pinaikul (1998) states that the quality of logistics services including service delivery, flexibility, responsiveness, level of customer orientation, and cost of services offered by service providers have become the important criteria used by customers in choosing a logistics service provider, customers tend to pay attention to how service providers can quickly respond to their needs. The statement also supported by Wilding dan Juriado (2004), service attributes that are important factors in choosing 3PL are timeliness in delivery, responsive level of service, provision of service providers, costs, waiting times, loading and unloading processes and shipping processes, company policy on problems, documentation, and actual performance. The statements mentioned above are some of the attributes included in the concept of logistic characteristics and affect the selection process, expertise, facilities and information about logistics provider companies..

According to several research Parasuraman et al. (1985), in general logistic service quality is divided into several parts, the first part is "tangibility" that refers to

facilities and equipment that are physically visible. The tangible component is related to the processes and resources used when implementing service commitments (Rafel, 2004). The tangible component consists of asset, personnel, and availability owned by PT. Berkati Aci Mulia. Based on the observation and interview, PT. Berkati Aci Mulia has many variations of fleet and has several branch office locations in five different areas which is an asset for the company to provide services to customers, while the personnel owned by PT. Berkati Aci Mulia are fulfilled the qualifications and knowledge in their job. The second component is reliability that refers to capability of the company in handling the transportation process including security of goods that are free from theft and damage, notification of transit time if experiencing delays, handling and meeting the specific needs of the customer, and can guarantee that the shipping procedures performed are in accordance with applicable instruments. According to the results of the interview with Mr. Y the company always ensures that the goods sent will be safe to the destination. If something unexpected happens like theft in some areas that are vulnerable to this, the company will make every effort to investigate this by using "the thugs" and ensure that the stolen items can be returned safely. Meanwhile, if there is a fleet damage that requires the fleet to be repaired so that there is a delay in delivery, the company will convey to the customer the chronology of the existing problems and ask the customer's decision regarding the delay in delivery. On the other hand the company will immediately send their trusted person (the thugs) to help provide all the additional equipment needed during the repair process. According to the results of the interview conducted with Mr. Y, said that PT. Berkati Aci Mulia, is very flexible to the customer needs and expectation as long as it can still be considered and does not harm the company. For example, customers from PT. A who already has a contract with PT. Berkati Aci Mulia, which contained about the company, it had to provide 10 fleets to PT. A but only 7 (seven) fleets are used, meaning that 3 (three) fleets can be reclaimed to the company even if it is not written in the contract.

The third component is "responsiveness". According to Thatté et al. (2009), responsiveness refers to the ability of a company to be able to react promptly to requests and assessments from customers. This includes such as the agility of customer service, speed and ease in the process of claim, and responsibility in every problem solving (Yuen & Thai, 2015). PT. Berkati Aci Mulia always tries to be able to hear and respond to complaints from its customers, such as when there are comments about the condition of the fleet that is not satisfy and the claim process that is processed quickly and detail by the company. PT. Berkati Aci Mulia, will usually identify the problem, then discuss it with the customer. In this case it is important for the company to be able to establish good communication with the customer.

The fourth component is "empathy" that refers to the things that companies do to show their attention to the customers (Franceschini & Rafele, 2000). Empathy in PT. Berkati Aci Mulia can be seen when the company provides payment relief for customers who facing payment constraints. PT. Berkati Aci Mulia will provide solutions that result from joint discussions with customers and company investigations on customers personally. Another things done by companies related to empathy is to adjust service prices with facilities and rules set by the government. When the company learns that the customer does not agree with the price increase, PT. Berkati Aci Mulia will look for ways to reduce logistics costs, but still giving the maximum performance to the customer. Meanwhile, if the logistics service costs arise and it caused by government regulations, then PT. Berkati Aci Mulia and other logistic companies will try to propose considerations regarding the increase in logistics costs.

The other empathy side of PT. Berkati Aci Mulia is the company not only concern about the customers, but also the employees, especially the drivers who need to be treated specially. PT. Berkati Aci Mulia, trying to make the drivers feel comfortable

working with the company, therefore, when they are on their way to deliver goods, drivers can be more easily contacted for monitoring and tracking purposes. This has a positive impact on customers because customers can also feel safe and believe the goods will arrive in good condition. According to Yuen and Thai (2015), this can increase the value of a logistics service company, because the company can be sensitive to issues that occur related to the cost of logistics services but can still maintain the safety of security funds in the process of shipping goods.

Value enhancement can influence customers to become more interested in being able to use the services provided by PT. Berkas Aci Mulia. According to Banomyong and Supatn (2011), the thing that is considered by the customer when choosing a logistics transportation service company is to see how the company can fulfill several logistics service attributes such as ensuring that there is no damage during transit, ease in the process of claim, care and response to customer needs, price flexibility and payment methods, as well as other things that make customers feel calm to send their goods using the services of the company. If the customers feel more satisfied with the service then it will lead to customer loyalty which is defined as a commitment to buy back long-term (Zhang et al., 2005). Satisfied customers can also recommend their choices to other customers (Senić & Marinković, 2014), subsequently this has a good impact on the company's financial performance and reputation owned by the company (Lam et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

This research is based on field findings regarding the strategy of a logistic transportation service provider that focuses its services by taking into account the expectations and evaluations of customers to be able to survive amidst intense competition among logistic transportation service providers. Based on these findings, this study has the desire to find out more about strategies such as what was done by PT. Berkas Aci Mulia for being able to realize and the company's considerations to maximize their service. Service oriented, service quality, and customer satisfaction are considered by PT. Berkas Aci Mulia in carrying out its business strategy. PT. Berkas Aci Mulia, stated that the success of a logistic service company is inseparable from the relationship between service and customer evaluation. This strategy corresponds to service oriented, service quality, and customer satisfaction. By implementing this, PT. Berkas Aci Mulia, they can find out what the things need to be improved in the service system, as well as ensure that customers can be satisfied with the services obtained because the service system formed is the result of company observations of things that are needed by the customers. Whereas, customer satisfaction has a positive impact for companies in the form of corporate reputation, customer satisfaction that leads to loyalty and recommendations to new customers so the company can continue to survive and remain superior among competitor companies.

It also implied that there are no aspects that can be used patents to measure service performance and meet customer needs, it was also conveyed in several theories used in this study. That is because the product in the form of service cannot be assessed physically but non-physically (which can only be felt). Therefore this study uses aspects from several studies related to service quality and matched with the actual conditions in the company. In this study, PT. Berkas Aci Mulia is prioritizing customer convenience and trying to improve the performance of their services, which are summarized in four aspects, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. Each aspect is supported by several points to clarify this research. These aspects are closely related to each other to support the process of improving service performance, because according to PT. Berkas Aci Mulia, these aspects were formed from the results of customer expectations and evaluations of the services provided. Improving performance and

considering customer satisfaction is not an easy thing for every company, so if one aspect is not working properly then the results given will not be maximized.

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