How to Make Green Service Delivery Sustainable?

Shirley Mo-chingYeung[+]

Hang Seng Management College, HKSAR

Abstract. This study focuses on exploring green concepts in service delivery for sustainability through understanding the importance and integration of economic returns, social concerns and industry development. This topic has not been comprehensively explored in the past. After conducting content analysis on literatures related to green living and green services, factors leading to sustainability have been identified. They are: 1) organizational mission with quality concepts, 2) staff management with caring mindset, 3) strategy with green elements, 4) technology with removing waste and streamlining operational processes, and 5) economic returns with increase in total revenue. Hence, it is suggested that organizations intending to achieve a higher level of sustainability have to understand the need of social development, the uniqueness and development of industry and the ways of achieving economic returns through learning how to green and how to lean with green purchasing of materials, with streaming or restructuring processes, with measuring outcomes. Longitudinal and quantitative data from countries in the East and West are suggested to validate the five identified factors for sustainability.

Keywords: Green, Lean, Sustainability, Outcomes.

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability have been a talking point in Hong Kong in the past few years. Different kinds of CSR and sustainability-related awards have been launched to encourage organizations of different nature to implement activities for the benefit to their customers, suppliers, employees and the community as a whole. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on the fundamental elements to carry out CSR and sustainability activities in a systematic way for generating economic, social and environmental impacts. As a result, this paper intends to explore the elements in this area.

In the past 20 years, Hong Kong has been transforming itself from a manufacturing city into a servicing city with finance, tourism, and retail industries as its important industries. Under the seven principles of ISO 26000 CSR guidelines, how do these industries embed environmental elements in their inputs, processes and outputs for achieving impacts in profit, people, and planet under sustainability? In fact, environmental dimension of CSR and sustainability can be integrated into upstream activities, for example, planning to use recycled materials in designing products and services, creating environmental-friendly channels in delivering and launching products and services to the end-users, using carbon-reduction vehicles in transportation of materials and products; and downstream activities, for example provision of green customer services through technology and value-added services through customization to customers.

2. Trend of CSR

Idowu and Towler [1] brought up the importance of "care" of organizations to the people and environment that they operate in. They mentioned that corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports were required in addition to traditional financial reports. They claimed organizations should make positive contribution to the society. This is the way to demonstrate that they do care people and environment in their operating environment. Hence, different kinds of CSR reporting systems emerge under this idea. Examples are ISO 14001 – Environmental Management System (EMS), SA 8000 system, and reports showing directors' contribution to CSR and charities. For example, the schemes of "Caring Company" and "Total

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[+] Corresponding author. Tel.: + 852-2636-7140; fax: + 852-2632-5092.
E-mail address: shirleyyeung@hsmc.edu.hk.

Caring Award", Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) started in 2002 and 2008 respectively. The criteria of "Caring to Environmental" has been added on top of "Caring to Community" and "Caring to Employees" to reflect the expectation of the society.

In the past five years, the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) jointly held a CSR Advocates campaign with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) to encourage organizations to participate the campaign to assess their CSR performance. According to Yeung [1], this was the first structured and quantified CSR Index that borrowed ISO 26000 CSR Guidelines to measure organizations' maturity level of social responsibility practices in Hong Kong.

The first CSR Advocate Mark Presentation Ceremony was held on 5th November 2009 to show recognition to 25 participated organizations covering construction, manufacturing, services, education and government offices. The timely HKQAA- HSBC CSR Advocate campaign was to highlight a balanced approach adopted by participated organizations as the seven core subjects measured under the campaign were:

- Organizational Governance;
- Human Rights;
- Labor Rights;
- The Environment;
- Fair Operating Practices;
- Consumer Issues, and
- Community Involvement and Development.

According to Cajazeira [2], the major principles for ISO 26000 are: accountability, transparency, ethical behavior, consideration for the stakeholders, legality, international standards, and human rights. It is the responsibility of organizations to consider the needs of the stakeholders in the above-mentioned seven aspects of the HKQAA-CSR Advocates campaign when designing work processes or executing business-related activities.

From the ISO 26000 CSR guidelines, the following characteristics have been observed that are needed to be considered in the service industry for sustaining business:

- Consideration of all stakeholders, especially employees, consumers and community in business practices;
- Recognition of organizations' visions and practices;
- Establishment of quality culture and transparency; and
- Acceptance of benchmarking for continual improvement.

3. Six Senses in Green Services for Sustainability

In 2005, Pink [3] mentioned that there would have a paradigm shift for the future in the perspective of talent required in the competitive business world. Pink highlighted that the future belonged to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind – creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. Pink [3] emphasized that 'we were moving from an economy and a society built on the logical, linear, computer-like capabilities of the information age to an economy and a society built on the inventive, empathetic, big-picture capabilities of what's rising in its place, the conceptual age.' According to Pink [3], people were seeking for 'function with design; argument with story; logic with empathy; seriousness with play; and accumulation with meaning." [3] Applying the idea of Pink into the service industry, it is predicted that talents working in the servicing industry need to be creative and empathetic when launching products or providing services to customers.

Moreover, Mckibben [4] advocated that there was a need to shift the thinking of economics that taking human satisfaction and social durability were more important for economic growth – a choice of more or better.

"Taken together, these facts show that we need to make a basic shift….,
we need to move decisively to rebuild our local economies.
These may well yield less study, but they produce richer relationships;
they may grow,
less quickly, if at all, but they make up for it in durability." [4]

From the perspective of economics, Mckinney [4] put forward an argument about 'more' and 'better' and he claimed that people needed to have a shift in their thinking about economics with emphasis on human satisfaction and societal durability. From the perspective of thinking, [3] concerned the development of six senses for the future. He put forward an innovative thinking that the creators, empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers were needed in the future.

Building on the trend of CSR, especially environmental dimension, "a mindset of creator" of Pink [3], and the rationale of "better" for durability of Mckibben [4], service providers need to re-visit the consuming behavior of their existing customers and integrate green elements into inputs, processes and outputs in the service delivery for sustainability.

4. Service Delivery and Total Quality Management (TQM)

Nitecki and Hernon [5] addressed the importance of service quality was "how well a provider performs vis-à-vis customers". The ultimate aim of service quality is to meet or exceed customer expectation or to narrow down the difference or gap between customer perceptions and expectation of service.

Yeung [1] mentioned that TQM aimed at embracing the value of maintaining customer focus and of being customer driven in development. She quoted the 14 elements of Deming to transform an organization, including Create Consistency of Purpose, Lead to Promote Change, Build Quality into the Product: Stop Depending on Inspections to Catch Problems, Build Long-Term Relationships Based on Performance Instead of Awarding Business on the Basis of Price, Continuously Improve Product, Quality and Service, Start Training, Emphasize Leadership, Drive Out Fear, Break Down Barriers Between Departments, Stop Haranguing Workers, Support, Help and Improve, Remove Barriers to Pride in Work, Institute a Vigorous Program of Education and Self-Improvement as well as Put Everybody in Company to Work on Transformation in view of increasing quality, productivity and competitiveness of a enterprise. Knowing these principles without walking putting into actions cannot have a total feel of TQM. The question is how to integrate the six senses and principles of TQM into delivering services involved with green elements for continual improvement.

5. The Study

This study primarily focuses on exploring factors for delivering green services with Total Quality Management concepts through collecting qualitative secondary data from search engine for conducting content analysis. According to Fraenkel & Wallen [7], content analysis was a study of textual messages of human behavior in an indirect way. This helps researchers generalize findings, predict the future, understand attitudes, values and cultural patterns of an organization or a country. Examples of textual messages are: textbooks, essays and articles from various sources. When interpreting or making inference of documents received, the researcher follow the ideas of Babbie [8] to trace, think, investigate and internalise information collected from relevant documents. Based on the search results of Emerald database with key words related to green living and green services, thirty-five papers have been found in the past 10 years.

6. The Findings

After conducting content analysis on literatures from 2006 to 2011 (35 articles from Emerald and EBSCO) related to green living and green services, factors leading to sustainability have been identified. They are: 1) organizational mission with quality concepts, 2) staff management with caring mindset, 3)

strategy with green elements, 4) technology with removing waste and streamlining operational processes, and 5) economic returns with increase in total revenue. The frequency count of the key words and quotations from literatures with TQM principles were shown in Table I.

Table I: Frequency Count on Key Words

Key Words	Frequency Count on Literature	Quotation from Literature	TQM Principles
Green Attitude	0.35%	"Green Hotels are environmentally friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste – while saving money – to help protect our one and only earth!" This statement includes key green management practices in the hotel industry, such as saving energy and water, managing waste and educating guests about the environment."	Lead to Promote Change Start Training Put Everybody in Company to Work on Transformation in view of increasing quality, productivity and competitiveness of an enterprise.
Green Infrastructure	0.26%	To show the relationship between green infrastructure, ecosystem services and effects more clearly, different line weights and patterns have been used. " "Green infrastructure is defined as a functional network of green spaces, green links and riverside spaces that can provide many benefits to the communities. "	Continuously Improve Product Quality and Service
Green Data Centre	0.62%	"Green Hotels are environmentally friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste – while saving money – to help protect our one and only earth!" This statement includes key green management practices in the hotel industry, such as saving energy and water, managing waste and educating guests about the environment."	Create Consistency of Purpose
Green Certification	0.44%	"Service providers are not the only companies that stand to benefit from the green IT certification. The vendors of their server virtualization and remote monitoring and management software and other technologies may also be boosted by the program."	Build Quality into the Product: Stop Depending on Inspections to Catch Problems

7. Conclusions, Limitations and Implications

Based on the literature review, it is suggested that organizations intending to achieve a higher level of sustainability have to understand how to integrate the need of social development, the uniqueness and development of industry and the ways of achieving economic returns with organizational mission with quality concepts, for example, CSR, sustainability, ISO 14001 EMS and ISO CSR Guidelines 26000, educating employees with care and customers with a mindset of green living, implementing strategy with green elements and using technology on environmental-related activities. As this study was involved with

qualitative secondary data for analysis, longitudinal and quantitative data from countries in the East and West were recommended to validate the five identified factors for reliability and validity.

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