

# Malaysian Postal Delivery Service in the New Normal Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era: E-Ducation for Postal Services

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**ABSTRACT:** Customer service is an important component of the marketing concept in Logistics Supply Value Chain Management (LSVCM) of Free Market Private sector enterprise. Menus of new development in the Logistics Supply Value Chain (LSVC) components especially in Public Enterprise Management have shown fresh areas of logistics that need to be addressed. This research study is therefore an attempt to fill the gap between existing and emerging new knowledge and applications in the management of logistics customer service in a transformed public enterprise performing the public delivery postal services in Malaysia. It is a case study of **POS MALAYSIA BERHAD** and its Customer Service in PosLaju Courier Business, directed to resolve policy-procedural issues and discrepancy in effective and efficient quality customer-service delivery as attested by 12 participant-respondents from top-middle-supervisory front-line management positions in various operation-functional departments or Divisions in PosLaju throughout numerous Headquarters Sectors and its Service Centres in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Shah Alam in the State of Selangor. Among the recommended improvement actions include a negotiated contract for PosLaju to operate autonomously independent of its parent company in order to add and create values that will propel it to quick response-fast track the courier service delivery to meet rapid market demand changes including client lifestyle preferences for home-site delivery today in view of the Covic-19 pandemic episodes domestically and worldwide.

**Key Words:** *Logistics Supply Value Chain Management (LSVCM), top-middle-supervisory frontline management, transformed public enterprise and public postal delivery, quick response-fast track customer-courier service*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Customer service is an important component (Bashir et al., 2020; Polas et al., 2020;(Bhattacharjee et al., 2019)of the marketing concept in Logistics Supply Value Chain Management (LSVCM) of Free Market Private sector enterprise. Menus of new development in the Logistics Supply Value Chain (LSVC) components especially in Public Enterprise Management have shown fresh areas (Polas et al., 2020; San et al., 2020) of logistics that need to be addressed. This research study is therefore an attempt to fill the gap between

existing and emerging new knowledge and applications in the management of logistics customer service in a transformed public enterprise performing the public delivery postal services in Malaysia.

The research focuses on a critical case study of POS MALAYSIA BERHAD and its Customer Service in PosLaju Courier Business. Essentially, the research investigator focuses on solutions to resolve policy-procedural issues and discrepancy in effective and efficient customer service delivery where lacking or questionable.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question is “How does PosLaju make the right balance to perform its social-business value mission to the general public and, at the same time, to obtain cost-effectiveness of its services?”

The remaining questions are as follows:

- Is the organization structure and management system of PosLaju user-friendly?
- Can alternate arrangement or/and product substitution be made to solve customer problems on immediate request?
- Is there a discrepancy between PosLaju Policy statement and its normal delivery practice?
- Does the concept ‘Just-in-Time’ (JIT) create problems for PosLaju and affect its customer service quality and value of collection and delivery performance?
- What are some practical suggestions to improve PosLaju services to the public?

## III. Objectives of the Study

**Primary Objective:** To determine the right balance for PosLaju to perform its social-business value mission to the general public and, at the same time, to obtain cost-effectiveness of its services.

### *Secondary Objectives*

- To ascertain the user-friendly organization structure and management system of PosLaju.
- To assess if an alternative arrangement or/and product substitution can be made to solve customer problems on immediate request.
- To determine the discrepancy between PosLaju policy statement and its normal delivery practice.
- To determine if the concept ‘Just-in-Time’ (JIT) create problems for PosLaju and affect its customer service quality and value of collection and delivery performance.
- To recommend some practical suggestions to improve PosLaju services to the public.

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of publications on Logistics Customer Service, Private and Public Supply Chain Management, and the Malaysian Transformation Programme (2010-2020) include the following:

- Logistics Customer Service in Private Sector Enterprise
- Private Sector Supply Chain Management
- Public Sector Supply Chain Management
- Customer Service in Public Sector Administration
- Customer Service of Malaysian Privatization of Public Sector Agencies
- Concepts of Generic Value Chain Management
- Quality versus Value
- Branding and Corporate Image

## V. METHODOLOGY

The basic theory for this research study is customer-service supply chain of value and quality in the management of postal collection and delivery in the public interest. And the main instrument employed for the purpose of this research study is utilizing the Qualitative Inductive Approach. The reasons for selecting this method, deemed appropriate for the research study, are as follows:

- The subject matter is treated as a unique case selection in a natural setting phenomenology and with a purposeful representative sample of PosLaju population from Headquarters and Federal Territory and Selangor functional branches together with their on-site customers.
- The research design is flexible is focused on the qualitative features of the participant responses, secured through data collection based on open-ended in-depth interviews and participant observation, documents, artefacts and recorded audio-visual instruments.
- The analysis is inductive and the interpretation of the results fully immersed with experiential knowledge and foresight of the researcher.
- The study and understanding of the phenomenon rely on the response of the subjects or participants whose meanings and interpretations form an integral part of their experiences particularly at work and their work stations. (Newman and Benz, 1998).

## VI. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Twelve (12) participants responded to the researcher's participant-observation engagements at their work stations, through in-depth open-ended interviews with recorded audio-visual instruments. All these are backed with documents, artefacts and experiential interpretation as necessary. The findings are as follows:

### (a) *Top Management*

Participants No. 1 and No. 2 opined that quality service and customer services should be further enhanced toward par excellence client satisfaction. This is to be further reinforced to sustain and grow the organization. In terms of Customer Experience, the organization must be constantly alert and sensitive to resolving better and par excellence services to the public.

*(b) Middle Management*

Participants No. 3, No. 4, No. 5 and No. 6, representing Human Resources, Information Technology, and Customer Experience Divisions, stated their views as follows:

- Participant No. 3 provided comprehensive suggestions to enhance PosLaju Customer Service whilst Participant No. 4 was more concerned about ensuring that the best practice produces the desired target result of the Division.
- Participant No. 5 was more concerned about the core business of PosLaju, that is, the fast delivery of items on the same day and next day delivery. He was confident that the future of PosLaju is in e-commerce business, focussing on majority of walk-in customers who have adopted digitalization in their business strategies.
- Participant No. 6, being an Executive in the Customer Experience Division, was more concerned about Pos Malaysia-PosLaju ‘public image’ particularly in negligence and contingency circumstances faced by the public. He suggested that the wide discrepancy in PosLaju Experience Division and the Customer Care Division of POS MALAYSIA BERHAD should be reviewed and standardized where commonalities exist to eliminate further confusion.

*(c) Supervisory Front-Line Management*

Participants No. 7, No. 8, No. 9, No. 10, No. 11 and No. 12 are front-line supervisors.

The details of the nature and job characteristics of these 12 participant-respondents are capsulated in the Attachment (Organizational Demographics of Participant Respondents) after VII. Conclusion. The following are their respective responses:

- Participant No.7, being a Supervisor in the Express Courier Division accountable for Operational Planning and Engineering, strictly imposes absolutely no delay-zero tolerance on vehicle breakdowns and other mitigating circumstances. Invariably, no delay-zero tolerance insistency for Staff Performance - coupled with its Key Performance Index (KPI) measurable performance of staff KPI practices including quality assurance and just-in-time (JIT) delivery commitment, has branded PosLaju as a fast-delivery service and also a low-cost one-day/two-day fulfilment of customer demand for its services.
- Participant No. 8, being a front-line Customer Service Supervisor, ensures effective implementation of customer service resolutions. At the same time, he also ensures that claims for compensation are justifiable. These actions ensure that PosLaju’s commitment to service quality and fast effective promised-day delivery are fulfilled including justifiable compensation claims-settlement for its negligent mishandling, misplaced or delayed items of customer delivery.
- Participant No. 9, being a ‘Hub Management’ Supervisor in the PosLaju Courier Express Division, is accountable for effective and efficient traffic management flow of the hub-system; the latter handles all items that must be delivered within 2 hours of its scheduled destination regardless of any mitigating circumstances. In this way, the top-priority commitment to quality service and client satisfaction of PosLaju is assured and secured.

- Participant No. 10, No. 11 and No. 12, being positioned as ‘Frontline Customer Service’ Supervisors, are accountable for implementing effective customer service resolutions whilst at the same time ensuring that claims for compensations are justifiable. Unfortunately, despite their seniority in service, they have not been able to describe in detail the operational aspects of other Divisions of PosLaju nor are they able to rate the performance of PosLaju after privatization or offer any speculation on the future directional growth of future postal services.

Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks, they are knowledgeable of the practical aspects of their jobs. In this regard, they are apparently “street-wise” executives of the trucking or motorcycle delivery genre of postal workers who are jobwise but remain uninterested in the policy directives and the future directional growth of PosLaju and its parent company – POS MALAYSIA BERHAD. In essence, these supervisors are specific-focus on their own work assigned functional commitment within the parameters of their work-space in the organizational hierarchy but they do settle any customer issues amicably and spot-on, with occasional recorded client commendation.

## VII. SUMMARY TABLE OF RESULT ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Organizational Demographics of Participant Responses**

<b>Interviewee/ Participant</b>	<b>Division/ Department</b>	<b>Operation/ Functional Operations</b>	<b>Position/ Job Title</b>	<b>Service Duration</b>	<b>Location/ Station</b>
Respondent No. 1	Courier Express	Planning Engineering, Operation Solutions, Hub Management	Vice President	15 years	Leadership Control Centre 1
Respondent No. 2	Customer Experience	Customer Service Compensation Customer Resolutions	Vice President	5 years	Leadership Control Centre 2
Respondent No. 3	Human Resource	Recruitment Staffing Employee Relations Compensation	Executive	5 years	HQ Sector 1
Respondent No. 4	Information Technology	IT Solutions IT Support and Maintenance	Executive	5 years	HQ Sector 2
Respondent No. 5	Customer Experience	Customer Service Compensation Customer Resolutions	Executive	5 years	HQ Sector 3

Respondent No. 6	Customer Experience	Customer Service Compensation Customer Resolutions	Executive	15 years	HQ Sector 4
Respondent No. 7	Courier Express	Operational Planning & Engineering	Supervisor	5 years	HQ Sector 5
Respondent No. 8	Customer Experience	Customer Service Resolutions Compensation	Supervisor	5 years	Service Centre1 Kota Damansara
Respondent No. 9	Courier Express	Hub Management Operation Solutions	Supervisor	5 years	HQ Sector 6
Respondent No. 10	Courier Express	Customer Service Resolutions Compensation	Supervisor	5 years	Service Centre 2 Petaling Jaya
Respondent No. 11	Customer Experience	Customer Service Resolutions Compensation	Supervisor	10 years	Service Centre 3 Brickfields, Federal Territory -Kuala Lumpur
Respondent No. 12	Customer Experience	Customer Service Resolutions Compensation	Supervisor	10 years	Service Centre 4 Glenmarie, Shah Alam

Source: Research's Qualitative (Interview) Findings

### VIII. CONCLUSION

The results of the qualitative findings show a discrepancy between PosLaju-POS MALAYSIA BERHAD **procedural policy statements** and **actual delivery practices**. The people affected are the discerning public and the staff of PosLaju who are continuously confronted with the discrepancy issues whilst doing their level best to serve their clients and the general public.

From the perspective of the Top Management of PosLaju, its main concern is the sustainable growth of the organization 's future profitability and the strategic direction of the postal service businesses. Thus, the future of PosLaju minus the complexity and perplexity of organized bureaucracy within the context of its parent company – POS MALAYSIA– lies in, among others, creative marketing and innovative products packaging to be more competitive

in its internal traffic flow of customer items as well as in the globalized business of courier services.

It is recommended as a bold step forward that PosLaju could work toward being an autonomous entity in the express courier business, given a new negotiated contractual agreement with POS MALAYSIA. This autonomy could enable PosLaju to make independent decisions and act quickly without referring to its parent company all the time. In other words, PosLaju must be autonomous to act on its own efficiently and effectively, and in quick response-fast track mode to meet rapid market demand changes including client lifestyle preferences for home-site delivery.

In 2019, PosLaju incurred a loss of RM165.8 million. In retrospective hindsight, POS MALAYSIA raised its postage rate and for registered mails and parcels from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 (The STAR, 2020). This move is expected to boost its Mail Division's profitability that has been affected by a lower mail volume and higher operating costs. In the meantime, AM Investment Bank Research has stated that the express courier segment is facing intense competition. It is therefore suggested that, among other actions to be taken, *ceteris paribus*, PosLaju should add and create values in the near future. After all, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.

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