Enhancing Multilingual Environment Services at the University of Derby: A Reflective Commentary and Marketing Analysis

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Abstract

This research focuses on the implementation of Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby, aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction and organizational development. The study encompasses a reflective commentary and marketing analysis, evaluating the features, servuction, services theatre, and promotion strategies of the new services. Through the application of Lovelock's classification of services and the servuction Framework, the study analyzes the intangibility, inseparability, variability, perishability, and rental/access factors of the Multilingual Environment services. Anticipated potential problems are identified, and solutions are proposed to address staff emotional issues and ensure effective service delivery. Additionally, a comprehensive marketing mix strategy, including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, is developed to promote the new services. Furthermore, a reflective commentary highlights the necessary skills and knowledge for effective management, emphasizing the importance of time management, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the implementation of Multilingual Environment services, offering recommendations for improvement and emphasizing the potential for enhancing customer satisfaction and organizational success at the University of Derby.

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Introduction

In today's globalized world, universities are increasingly recognizing the importance of providing services that cater to diverse linguistic needs. The University of Derby, situated in a multicultural and multilingual environment, has embarked on a journey to enhance its services to meet the needs of its international student community (Baranova et al., 2011; Li et al., 2022). This introduction sets the stage for a reflective commentary and marketing analysis aimed at evaluating and improving the Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby.

The Multilingual Environment services initiative seeks to address the diverse linguistic needs of students by providing language support and resources tailored to their requirements. These services encompass a range of offerings, including Multilingual self-service machines, International staff assistance, and personalized language guidance. By implementing these services, the University of Derby aims to enhance the overall experience of its international student population and ensure their academic success.

This research endeavors to critically evaluate the features, servuction, services theatre, and promotional strategies associated with the Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby. By employing theoretical frameworks such as Lovelock's classification of services theory and the 7Ps marketing mix, the research seeks to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of these services and identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, this research anticipates potential challenges that may arise during the implementation of the Multilingual Environment services and proposes strategies to address them proactively. Through a reflective commentary, the research also highlights the key managerial skills and knowledge required to effectively manage and enhance these services. Overall, this research aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby, ultimately contributing to the institution's goal of fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of their linguistic background.

The features of new services

Services are dynamic entities, characterized by the exchange of performance from one party to another, resulting in economic activities that generate value and benefits for customers within specific temporal and spatial contexts, thereby facilitating desired changes (Vargo, 2016). Consequently, the evaluation of service characteristics such as intangibility, perishability, variability, inseparability, and rental/access factors become crucial in devising effective service plans. Additionally, drawing upon Lovelock's classification of services theory provides a theoretical basis for categorizing new services, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Building upon previous research and theoretical frameworks, understanding the distinct features and implications of new services is imperative. Prior studies have extensively explored various facets of service provision, shedding light on the intricate dynamics that govern service delivery and utilization. Batley and Mcloughlin (2015) highlighted the significant influence of politics on public services, proposing a framework that elucidates how service characteristics intersect with political commitment, organizational control, and user power. This perspective underscores the multifaceted nature of service provision, where political factors interact with service attributes to shape policy responses and service outcomes. Wolak, Kalafatis, and Harris (1998) contributed to the comprehension of service characteristics by investigating the extent to which consumers differentiate between products and services. Although their study did not reveal significant distinctions in consumer perceptions based on service characteristics, it emphasized the importance of delving into the nuances of service provision in consumer decision-making processes. Raunic and Xenos (2008) provided valuable insights into the

utilization of university counseling services, emphasizing the demographic and psychological factors that influence service access and utilization rates among local and international students. Their findings underscored the necessity of addressing barriers to service utilization and tailoring interventions to meet the diverse needs of student populations. Brand et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive review of hospital characteristics associated with improved performance, highlighting the complex interplay between structural and operational factors in healthcare delivery. Their findings underscored the need for targeted interventions to optimize hospital performance and enhance patient outcomes. Utkarsh (2023) offered a novel perspective on service advertising, exploring the effectiveness of tangible and intangible cues in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. By examining the role of temporal distance in consumer evaluation of quality cues, the study provided valuable insights into the design of service advertisements and marketing strategies.

Drawing upon these prior studies, this analysis aims to deepen our understanding of new service features, elucidating their implications for service management and delivery. By synthesizing theoretical insights with empirical evidence, the goal is to inform strategic decision-making and foster innovation in service provision within today's dynamic marketplace.

Characteristics of Service
Intangibility
Intangibility, as defined by Palmer (2014), refers to aspects of a service that evade physical perception, making them elusive to define or grasp mentally. These intangible elements transcend traditional senses like sight, smell, sound, taste, or touch. In the realm of the 'Multilingual Environment' service, crucial components such as self-service technologies, international staff, and multilingual guidelines are recognized as pivotal factors. However, the technical background support required for these services falls within the realm of intangibility. This facet significantly impacts the efficacy of new services. For instance, when self-service technology devices translate various languages demanded by consumers, they encounter challenges due to language structure variations, exemplified by the Simplified and Traditional versions of Chinese. To augment service consciousness and bolster consumer satisfaction, managers should broaden options for customers utilizing self-service technologies. This could entail sending emails to customers, disseminating promotional pamphlets to a wider audience, and displaying brochures within university premises.

In parallel, prior studies have offered invaluable insights into the dynamic interplay between tangibility and intangibility in service management. Oliveira and Brandão (2023) examined tangible and intangible aspects in hospitality management, aiming to pinpoint the most influential factors shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty in hotel establishments. Through a questionnaire survey targeting guests of Portuguese hotel establishments, they found tangible parameters held greater value for consumers, while intangible aspects related to human resources garnered significant attention. Likewise, Kim, Lee, and Han (2023) explored the impact of tangible and intangible hotel in-room amenities on customer experience, brand attitude, and loyalty, particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Their quantitative study evaluated relationships among these constructs before and during the pandemic, considering the moderating influence of risk perception theory. They discovered that while tangible amenities exerted a stronger influence on customer experience pre-pandemic, the impact of intangible amenities became more pronounced during the pandemic. Their findings offer invaluable guidance for hotel professionals seeking to effectively manage in-room amenities, thereby fostering satisfactory customer experiences and brand loyalty in the COVID-19 era.

Inseparability

Services are produced and consumed simultaneously, with the client and provider collaborating in real-time (Wilson, 2012). The interaction between producer and consumer is essential for the realization of the service, particularly evident in self-service machines. However, there are instances, such as during Easter or Christmas holidays when consumer demand is low, allowing for the separation of service production and consumption. Conversely, during peak periods like back-to-school season, self-service machines may experience high demand, leading to overcrowding. In such cases, managers should monitor usage periodically, ensuring a balance between peak and off-peak periods. Staff deployment should be optimized to coincide with periods of low demand, maximizing efficiency and resource allocation.

Variability

Services inherently involve human interaction, but individuals vary in their responses and capabilities (David & Fiona, 2016). This variability poses a challenge for ensuring and enhancing consumer satisfaction, which is paramount for managers. In the context of 'Multilingual Environment' services, self-service technologies demonstrate high efficiency with customers. However, the variability introduced by international staff, influenced by diverse training outcomes and abilities, necessitates adjustments to enhance consumer satisfaction and enrich customer experience. To address this, managers can implement several strategies. Firstly, increasing the number of self-service machines can reduce costs while simultaneously improving customer satisfaction. Additionally, evaluating the current state of 'Multilingual Environment' services through surveys targeted at international students can provide insights into consumer demands. By leveraging automation and conducting targeted surveys, managers can identify and address variations in service delivery to meet the needs of the target consumer demographic.

Perishability

Services exhibit a high degree of perishability, meaning that if they are not utilized promptly, they are lost forever (James, 2016). This characteristic poses challenges as the demand for services often experiences wide fluctuations, potentially leading to inventory issues. In the case of self-service technology in universities, such fluctuations can be particularly pronounced, especially during periods such as summer holidays. During these times, ensuring the accuracy, consistent availability, and reliability of services becomes challenging. To address these challenges, managers must engage in reasonable programming and demand forecasting. Predicting consumer usage during both special and non-special periods is essential for effective planning and supply management. By understanding patterns of demand, managers can develop strategies to support service provision during peak periods and optimize resource allocation. Additionally, leveraging technology can assist in maximizing peak usage while minimizing periods of low demand, providing a solid foundation for informed decision-making regarding supply management.

Rental/access

In the realm of services, consumers are granted rental or access rather than ownership, a departure from the transfer of ownership typical of product provision (Jeffrey, 2014). As consumers utilize self-service machines, each individual may have unique requirements. To ensure prolonged and effective operation of the service, a strategy can be implemented wherein the machine remains operational for a set duration, such as 8 minutes per consumer interaction. However, if a consumer does not engage with the touchscreen for more than 10 seconds during the self-service process, the service will revert to its original state. The primary objective of this approach is twofold: to minimize costs associated

with prolonged idle periods of the machine and to maintain optimal device status for continued functionality. By setting time limits for each consumer interaction and implementing an automatic reset mechanism for idle instances, the service can be efficiently managed while providing consistent access to consumers.

Analysis the new services and anticipate potential problems

At the heart of marketing lies the comprehension of consumer behaviors. Without a thorough understanding of consumers, organizations struggle to create and deliver effective services. Consequently, consumer consumption can be delineated into three primary phases: the pre-purchase stage, the service encounter, and the post-contact stage (Cathy, 2013). This framework integrates the previous blueprint with Servcution framework analysis of the new services, thereby addressing potential issues within the identified areas. By recognizing the significance of each phase in the consumer journey, organizations can tailor their strategies to align with consumer preferences and expectations. Understanding consumer behaviors throughout these stages allows organizations to anticipate needs, enhance service delivery, and foster lasting relationships with consumers. Through the integration of the Servcution framework analysis, organizations can systematically assess and address key areas of concern, ensuring that the new services meet consumer demands effectively and efficiently.

Figure 1: The Servuction Framework for new services
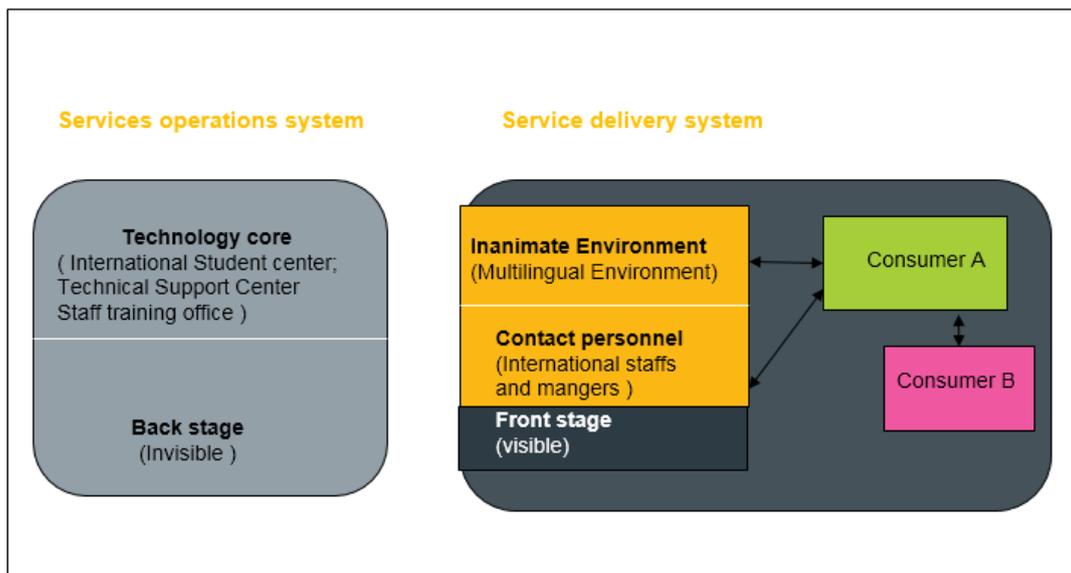
New services

The Servuction framework model delineates visible elements for service delivery systems and invisible elements for service operation systems to the customer (David, 2012). Within the service operation system, there are three key sections: The International Student Center, the Technical Support Center, and the staff training office of the technology core. These elements occur within the organization, unseen by the consumer, yet profoundly impacting their experience (Hans, 2016). They serve as the backstage for technical maintenance and procurement, ensuring the quality of staff, and establishing service production for the front stage. The International Student Center provides self-service technologies machines and facilities for consumers, while the staff training office ensures the quality of international workers. Simultaneously, the technology support center is responsible for maintenance and development for self-services. Each department fulfills its responsibilities, forming a positive service chain. However, should issues arise with 'Multilingual Environment' services, synergistic solutions across all back stages sustain the development of the front stage

objectively, positively impacting consumers at the University. Conversely, the front stage encompasses the environment, the service manager, or other consumers, directly influencing service quality assurance. Contact personnel, including international staff and managers, deliver the new service. Their demeanor, courtesy, and politeness during service interactions significantly impact the service experience for end customers (Elaine, 2013). Creating a Multilingual environment is the ultimate goal of the new service proposal.

Anticipate some potential problem areas

Integrating with the blueprint allows us to anticipate potential problems within the service delivery system (see Appendix 3). As illustrated in Figure 1, the system comprises two key sections: contact personnel or service providers and the inanimate environment. These components collectively contribute to the facility, environmental ambiance, staff demeanor, and overall emotional experience for consumers. Given that this new service targets a segment of international students, it will inevitably encounter specific periods of heightened demand, notably during the back-to-school season. During these peak periods, front-stage personnel may experience tension and encounter service-related challenges. It is imperative to maintain a clean and safe working environment for employees while also ensuring adequate staffing levels to alleviate stress. Additionally, managers must carefully select, empower, and train personnel capable of delivering the desired service experience envisioned by the company or organization. Furthermore, during peak periods such as the back-to-school season, it is essential not to overlook consumer demand. Providing visual aids, such as images or pictures, can directly convey information to consumers, including vital service lists and informational guidelines. It's important to note that the presence of other consumers in visible areas can enhance the overall consumer experience but should not negatively impact consumer satisfaction between individual consumers. Moreover, if a self-service machine malfunctions while in use by one consumer (Consumer A), it is crucial for managers and staff to effectively manage the emotions of Consumer A, as their experience may influence Consumer B. Additionally, the technical support center must promptly address any issues with the self-service machines and ensure that 2-3 international staff members remain in the self-service machine area during busy periods. To prevent machine errors, technical personnel should conduct thorough checks before concluding their work shifts.

**Applying the Marketing Mix including a promotional plan**

The service marketing mix is a pivotal component of the service blueprint design. While it shares fundamental similarities with the traditional marketing mix, the distinctive nature of services entails nuanced implications for its application (Eugene, 2013). Consequently, the 7Ps marketing mix is well-suited for the promotion and popularization of new services.

Figure 2: 7PS marketing mix

Product (Service)

Figure 3: Three service levels for new service
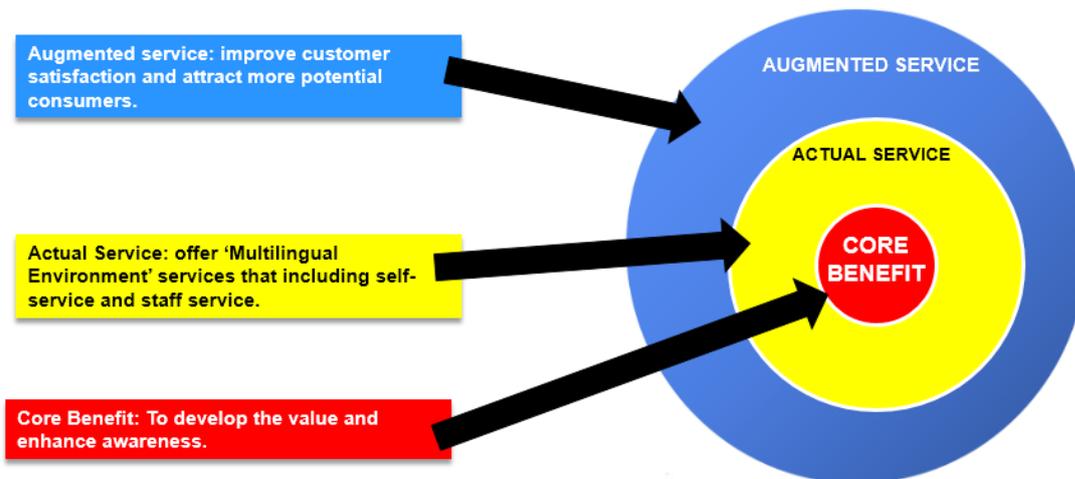
The product is the means through which organizations endeavor to meet consumer needs (Adrian, 2011). In this context, a product encompasses anything that an organization offers to potential customers, whether tangible or intangible. Currently, the University of Derby lacks a language product or service tailored specifically for international students. Therefore, the primary objective of this new service is to enhance value and increase brand awareness among the target consumer base. To achieve this goal, the proposal involves providing 'Multilingual Environment' services, which encompass both self-service and staff-assisted services, catering to the needs of international students at the University of Derby. By offering services that exceed in benefits and features, the aim is to enhance customer satisfaction and attract potential consumers from all corners of the globe.

Price

In this new service, both self-service technologies and staff services are provided free of charge, as they are included in the private tuition fee for customers. However, the process of purchasing and using these services does entail a cost in terms of the time and effort that consumers need to invest, particularly when using the self-service machines. Therefore, it is essential for the provider to consider the current and potential customers' time and effort as part of the overall price, and to offer additional activities to enhance the customer experience.

The University of Derby already offers preparatory courses that include English training sessions before students enroll in the university. These courses are typically scheduled from May to July each year and present an opportunity to engage with new consumers more comprehensively. Additionally, the International Student Center organizes a summer camp for international students every August (University of Derby, 2017), which can be closely associated with the new service to further enhance its value and provide experiential opportunities for both potential and current consumers.

To attract more potential consumers and reduce costs, it is essential to ensure that the self-service machines operate at maximum performance. Moreover, minimizing the expenses associated with machine repair and maintenance is crucial. One suggestion is to encourage the use of the new service during spare time on weekends, when maintenance activities can be conducted without disrupting regular operations.
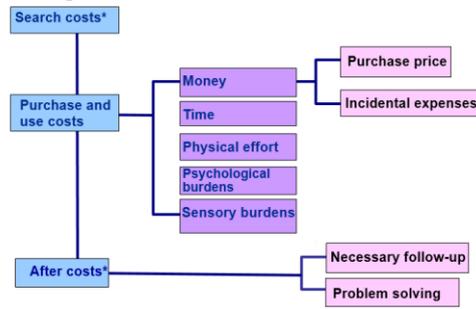
Figure 4: The cost of consumers

Figure 5: The timetable for preparatory courses in University of Derby

Place

The self-service machines can be strategically located at the entrance of the University of Derby, as depicted in detail in Figure 6. Additionally, the University of Derby can leverage various channels such as its official website platform, social media channels, and email communication to inform consumers about the availability and benefits of the new services. Given that the target customers for this new service are international students, utilizing social media platforms becomes particularly crucial due to their widespread usage and accessibility worldwide.

For example, social media apps like WeChat and Weibo are immensely popular in China. Therefore, the University of Derby should actively promote the new services on these platforms to reach potential customers in China and other regions where these apps are prevalent. By leveraging social media effectively, the university can attract a diverse range of prospective consumers from around the world, thereby maximizing the reach and impact of its marketing efforts.

Figure 6: Self-services machine can put in this area

Promotional

Based on the findings from previous studies, the University of Derby has a substantial number of international students and holds significant potential for growth in the future. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be a peak in activity around September when students return to the university after their vacation periods. In preparation for this peak period, a promotional plan will be launched ahead of September, as illustrated in Figure 4. This proactive approach to promotion will ensure that the new services are effectively marketed to international students, maximizing their awareness and uptake upon their return to the university.

Figure 7: Promotional planning for new services

| Date	Type of Promotion?	Target?	Where?	Who?	Why?	Cost	Resources	Impact	Linked to
May 2017	E-mail advertising	Disseminate information	E-MAIL	Current consumers	Because it to enhance disseminate range for consumers, keep the information better to show for existing consumers .	Time	Current consumers	To better delivery message to current consumers and enhance consumer satisfaction	University of Derby office website , Udo mail
June 2017	Social media	Often browse social media for young student	Facebook ,twitter, YouTube	Young student	Increase the development of International student	$6000	University of Derby	In order to develop the brand awareness and images of the world.	Facebook ,twitter and YouTube office account , office website ,
July 2017	Staff Training	Ensure the new staff can adapt new work and enhance consumer satisfaction	International student centre	staffs	Because let new staffs to better serve consumers.	$1000	University of Derby	staff offer the high quality servicers for consumer	Professional staff training, manger ,consumer feedback .
August 2017	New media	Potential consumer	social media	Potential consumer in the world	In order to advance the brand awareness and image in worldwide.	$10000	New media from different countries	Attract potential consumer all around the world.	Wechat ,Weibo in China , Line in Korea and Japan.

People

In most service industries, people play a crucial role in the marketing mix as they are a defining factor in the service delivery process (Dewar, 2013). For the new services being introduced, staff members hold significant importance. The staff can be categorized into three main sections: managers, backstage technical operations employees, and front-stage staff. Firstly, managers are tasked with considering the overall conditions of the new service and ensuring a stable distribution of resources. They must possess foresight to anticipate potential issues that consumers may encounter with the new service. Additionally, managers should actively

monitor the service's performance and track key metrics to ensure its effectiveness. Front-stage staff members play a pivotal role in assisting consumers and resolving any issues they may face. Their primary objective is to ensure customer satisfaction by addressing concerns promptly and effectively. Similarly, backstage staff members are instrumental in managing and maintaining the efficiency of self-service operations. They are responsible for the technical aspects of the service, ensuring that self-service machines operate smoothly and efficiently. Moreover, backstage workers facilitate communication between managers and front-stage staff, ensuring seamless coordination and implementation of the service. Overall, all staff members, regardless of their role, contribute to the successful implementation and delivery of the new service. Their collective efforts play a crucial role in enhancing the overall customer experience and satisfaction.

Process
Before the previous assignment as is demonstrated in the figure 8 that provide more details for new service.

Figure 8: Blueprint for Multilingual environment services
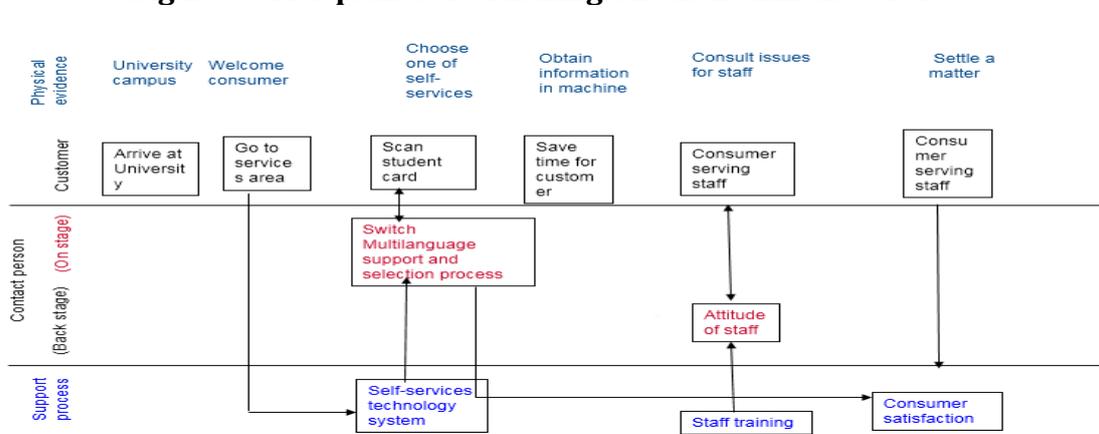
Physical evidence
Due to the intangible nature of services, consumers often face difficulty in evaluating a service before actually experiencing it, thus increasing the inherent risk involved in making a purchase decision (John & David, 2012). While self-service technologies machines provide a form of physical evidence, the introduction of new services integrates tangible elements, such as staff members, into the offering to enhance the overall customer experience for the organization.

Skills and Knowledge reflection
In contemporary leadership agendas, the emphasis on knowledge, skills, and personal professional development is paramount, as highlighted by Daft & Marcic (2014). Drawing from this services module, it is suggested that managers need to possess a diverse skill set, including time management, communication, critical thinking, and coordinating abilities. Additionally, they should master aspects of marketing, consumer behaviors, and integrated marketing communication plans for products or services, as underscored by the dynamic nature of the market. To navigate market fluctuations effectively, managers must adopt coping strategies and remain adaptable, as emphasized by Roe (2014). This entails a multifaceted approach to learning and growth, encompassing training, mentoring, coaching, networking, and reflective practice, as depicted in Figure 8. In the role of a new service manager, it is imperative to excel in crisis management. Identifying and mitigating risks, leveraging digital support, and appointing an accessibility lead are critical responsibilities. However, recognizing a deficiency in communication skills necessitates improvement in being attentive, approachable, confident,

and maintaining control of situations. Effective time management is essential, requiring meticulous planning and the use of tools like the priority matrix to prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance. Moreover, possessing strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills is indispensable. When encountering operational challenges, the ability to remain calm, analyze issues, and implement solutions swiftly is crucial. Additionally, evaluating various options and selecting the most efficient course of action are vital components of effective problem-solving. These skills collectively contribute to successful service management and ensure the delivery of high-quality experiences to consumers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has thoroughly examined the introduction of Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby, offering valuable insights into various aspects of service implementation and management. Through the analysis of features, anticipation of potential problems, development of a marketing mix strategy, and reflection on necessary skills and knowledge for effective management, this study has provided a comprehensive framework for enhancing customer satisfaction and organizational success. The research utilized theoretical frameworks and models such as Lovelock's classification of services, the Servuction framework, and the 7Ps marketing mix to provide a solid foundation for analysis. By incorporating these frameworks, the study was able to delve into the intricacies of service provision and identify key areas for improvement. Furthermore, the research demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of consumer behavior, personnel management, process optimization, and physical evidence in service delivery. The proposed strategies for addressing potential challenges and enhancing the overall customer experience were practical and well-reasoned. However, while the research provides valuable insights and recommendations, its effectiveness ultimately depends on factors such as the accuracy of the information presented, the validity of the theoretical frameworks applied, and the feasibility of implementing the proposed strategies in the real-world context of the University of Derby. Moving forward, further validation through empirical research or case studies could strengthen the research findings and provide additional insights. By continually refining and adapting the strategies outlined in this research, the University of Derby can effectively meet the diverse linguistic needs of its international student community, foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment, and ultimately achieve its organizational goals.

Implications

Firstly, the implications of this study underscore the significance of understanding and addressing the diverse linguistic needs of international student populations in higher education institutions. By implementing Multilingual Environment services, universities can enhance the overall student experience, promote inclusivity, and support academic success. This study highlights the importance of proactive service design and management to meet the evolving needs of a multicultural student body. Secondly, the findings of this study emphasize the critical role of effective marketing strategies in promoting new services and attracting target audiences. Through the application of the 7Ps marketing mix and the development of a comprehensive promotional plan, universities can maximize the visibility and uptake of Multilingual Environment services among international students. This study emphasizes the need for universities to leverage various communication channels, including social media platforms, to reach and engage with diverse student demographics effectively. In terms of style, these implications are presented in a concise and structured manner, with clear transitions between points. The language used is formal and professional, reflecting the academic context of the study. By organizing the implications into two distinct points and providing clear explanations, the reader can easily grasp the key takeaways from the research.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the implementation of Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research primarily focuses on the theoretical framework and conceptual analysis of the proposed services, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could benefit from incorporating empirical data and real-world case studies to validate the effectiveness of the proposed strategies in diverse institutional contexts. Secondly, the study primarily examines the perspectives of service providers and administrators, potentially overlooking the perspectives and experiences of end-users, particularly international students. Future research could employ qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to explore student perceptions, preferences, and satisfaction levels regarding Multilingual Environment services. By incorporating student feedback, universities can gain a deeper understanding of their needs and preferences, thereby enhancing service design and delivery.

Additionally, this study focuses on the implementation of Multilingual Environment services within a specific institutional context, namely the University of Derby. While the findings may have relevance to similar higher education institutions, they may not be directly applicable to other organizational settings. Future research could explore the transferability of the proposed strategies across different institutional contexts and cultural settings to provide more comprehensive insights into service management and delivery.

Furthermore, this study primarily examines the implementation of Multilingual Environment services from a marketing and operational perspective. Future research could explore additional dimensions of service quality, such as accessibility, usability, and inclusivity, to provide a more holistic understanding of service provision in multicultural environments. By considering a broader range of factors, universities can develop more effective strategies for enhancing the student experience and promoting diversity and inclusion on campus.

Moreover, while this study offers valuable insights into the implementation of Multilingual Environment services at the University of Derby, it is essential to recognize its limitations and potential areas for future research. By addressing these limitations and exploring new avenues for inquiry, scholars can continue to advance our understanding of service management in multicultural higher education settings, ultimately contributing to the creation of more inclusive and supportive learning environments.

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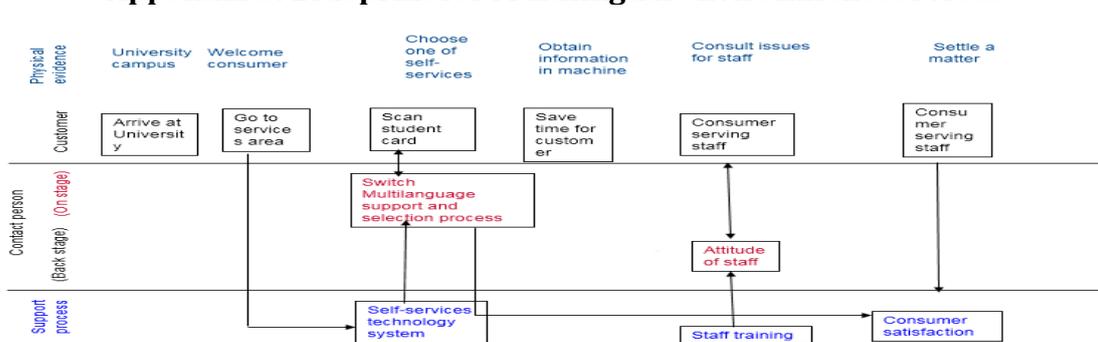
Appendix

Appendix 1: Lovelock's classification of services

Appendix 2: Lovelock's classification of Multilingual Environment' services

	People as recipient	Thing as recipient
Tangibles elements	Staff Manger	Attentiveness of staff
Intangibles elements	Environment Friendliness	Technology support Staff training

Appendix 3: Blueprint for Multilingual environment services

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