

Tool

Analysis of Service Organisations (Conceptual Approach)

Area of Application	Conceptual approach especially designed for the analysis of service organisations
Objective	The conceptual approach facilitates the analysis of service organisations, taking special features of the management of service organisations into consideration

1 Context

Service provision follows different laws to the production of material goods. Many organisational analyses of service organisations to date have been implicitly based on the “model” of material goods production. This frequently results in important aspects relevant to the process of service provision being overlooked, or receiving only inadequate treatment. The present analysis attempts to remedy these deficits, with the aim of taking a first step towards better-designed organisational analyses of service organisations.

2 Description of the tool

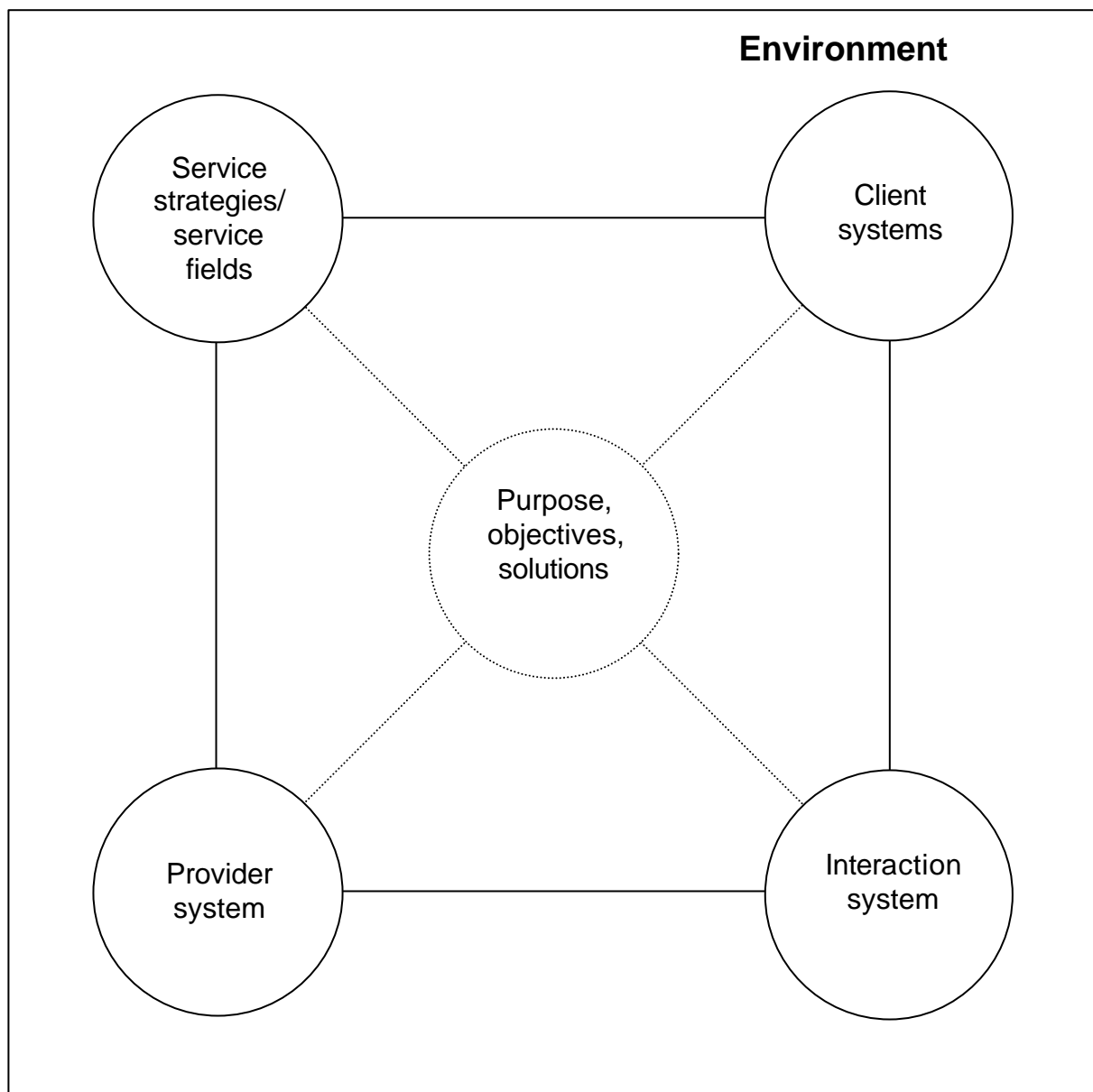
This tool takes a conceptual approach to the analysis of service organisations, and is designed to address the specific features of services and service provision. What distinguishes the provision of services from the production of material goods is that here the customers – to a greater or lesser extent – play a part in providing the services. Service provision depends on how willing and able clients are to cooperate, and is strongly influenced by the design of the interaction between provider and client. When analysing a service organisation, therefore, it is particularly important to take this aspect into account. A feature of service organisations providing high quality services is that their own structure and processes are geared to the interactional requirements and possibilities of their clients. Therefore, the organisational analysis of a service organisation should not concentrate solely on the “provider system”, but also devote special attention to the “client system”, its ability and readiness to play an active part, together with the design of the “interaction system”.

An organisational analysis of service organisations should cover the following key areas (cf. Fig. 1):

- *Purpose, objectives and problem-solving areas* (to which the services are geared)
- *Service fields and service strategies* (i.e. those areas in which services are to be offered, and the strategies for service delivery)
- *The client system* (i.e. those aspects of organisation, management, resources and technology on the client side that are relevant to service provision)

- *The provider system* (i.e. organisation, management, resources and technology on the supply side in particular)
- *The interaction system* (i.e. the system of individual services, quid pro quos and service relationships on which service provision is based)
- *The environment* (especially with regard to “extraneous” influences on the interaction with the client).

Fig. 1: Main areas of analysis for service organisations



3 Use of the tool

The conceptual approach for the analysis of service organisations provides a guideline for any analysis of service organisations by focusing on those aspects of the service system that are frequently overlooked in “traditional” organisational analyses. Analyses of the client system and interaction system (i.e. the way the relationship with the clients is organised and shaped) are crucially important to the success of service organisations.

The following main areas of analysis are proposed:

- *Purpose, objectives and problem-solving areas*
- *Service fields and service strategies*
- *The client system*
- *The provider system*
- *The interaction system*
- *The environment*

(See concepts: A case study illustrating an example of just such an analysis of a service organisation can be found in Huppert, W. and Urban, K. (1998): Analysing Service Provision instruments for development cooperation illustrated by examples from irrigation, Schriftenreihe der GTZ No. 265, GTZ, Eschborn, Germany, 103 pp)