

An Empirical Study on Impact of Customers' Satisfaction and Loyalty Towards Hospitals in Coimbatore City

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Abstract: In the competitive world number of Hospitals have been emerged and captured the market too. Almost every one of us is using hospitals for their health care. Each hospital has been providing different Treatment methods with specialized doctors, and introducing innovation equipment to retain the customers. In fact, it is a daunting task for each Hospital, to give quality treatment, clean and Hygiene environment to the patients. So it is very complicate to decide about the hospitals has its role. Hence this study is going to conclude the satisfaction, loyalty towards hospitals and understanding the customer's awareness among the hospitals in Coimbatore city. Providing high service quality is one of the main functions of health systems. Measuring service quality is the basic prerequisite for improving quality.

Keywords: Hospitals, Customer, Loyalty, Expectation, Service Quality

1. Introduction

Customer satisfaction as an important determinant of success and long-term survival in the health care industry has caught the providers' attention in the present competitive conditions. For the hospitals, satisfied patients are important because the patients' greater satisfaction with the care would entail the patients' more adherence of the doctor's orders, more loyalty, positive word of mouth by the patient, reducing the number of the patient's complaints, higher profitability, higher rates of the patient return and more patient referrals. For these reasons, the patient's satisfaction evaluation has become a part of the strategic process of health care organizations. Measuring the patient satisfaction and recognition of its effective factors is important to the health care managers due to the impacts they make on the health and financial results of the health care organizations. Almost every one of us is using hospitals for their health care. Each hospital has been providing different Treatment methods with specialized doctors, and introducing innovation equipment to

retain the customers. In fact, it is a daunting task for each Hospital, to give quality treatment, clean and Hygiene environment to the patients.

Quality improvement acts as a strategy to attain a competitive advantage in an industry and improve the reputation and profitability of a health organization during time. All hospitals have found it necessary to measure, monitor, and improve the quality of healthcare services in order to survive and achieve patient satisfaction. Also, the provision of high quality services is crucial to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Healthcare managers need a thorough understanding of the ways to increase the quality of care in practical terms. Under such circumstances, hospital managers put their main emphasis on attracting as many patients as possible and making loyal customers by recognizing their expectations and trying to respond to them in an effective manner. Davis and colleagues confirmed the necessity of measuring healthcare quality in a competitive

environment. Service production in the industry is dramatically different from the healthcare services provision in many aspects: e.g., in terms of service quality assessment, one of the most common ways in healthcare is to use the consumers' (patients) perception about the services provided.

To evaluate patients' satisfaction and expectations of service quality, the SERVQUAL model was introduced in 1985. They concluded that customers assess quality by comparing their expectations with real performance insights. If the customer's performance perceptions exceed their expectations, then the service provider provides quality service. The difference in scores determines the level of service quality.

Many researchers have been conducted to assess service quality gap in hospitals and other healthcare organizations worldwide 3,4,5. In this study, five dimensions of service quality were measured including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

A principle element in quality assurance, evaluating the current level of performance and developing appropriate strategies for improvement is importance–performance analysis (IPA). This technique is based on a four-quadrant matrix which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the services and determines improvement opportunities to develop strategic planning. IPA has recently been used to assess service quality in healthcare systems. This method is also beneficial for managerial purposes such as allocating insufficient resources to those areas of performance with considerable effect on consumer satisfaction.

Quality is a multidimensional concept with patient satisfaction as one of the most important facets which mirrors the quality of services in a hospital setting. Patient satisfaction is defined as patients' opinions of “how well” services meet their needs and expectations, also considered as a valid indicator to measure service quality. Since the 1990s, patient satisfaction has been considered as a method to measure care recipients' perceptions about the quality of health services and to analyze their willingness to pay or utilize such services provided in healthcare facilities. However, the IPA model is based on comparing the importance level (expected satisfaction) and performance level (perceived satisfaction) of service quality to extract improvement strategies that will be effective for increasing customer satisfaction.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the awareness among hospitals by the customers.
- To analyze the level of satisfaction and expectation of customer regarding various services and understands the problems faced by the respondents.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the competitive world number Hospitals have been emerged and captured the market too. Almost every one of us is using hospitals for their health care. Each hospital has been

providing different Treatment methods with specialized doctors, and introducing innovation equipment to require their customers to retain the standard. In fact, it is a daunting task for each Hospital, to give quality treatment, clean and Hygiene environment to the patients. So it is very complicate to decide about the hospitals has its role. Hence this study is going to conclude the satisfaction, loyalty towards hospitals and understand the hospital awareness in Coimbatore city among the people.

2. Research Methodology

A research design is the arrangement of condition for the collection and the analysis of the data in a manner that combine relevance to research purpose with the economy in procedure. The research design used in the study is descriptive in nature since it is concerned with describing the characteristics of certain brands of manufactures. Data collected through both primary and secondary data. 300 Samples were collected and Statistical Tools were used to analysis this study. Those are Percentage analysis and Ranking analysis.

2.1. Review of Literature

Since a satisfied customer is the core concern of any organization, they pay close loyal to the factors that influence a customer's decision towards a brand. This study has considered four main important factors related to services and physical aspects to know their effect on customer satisfaction (Hanif *et al.*, 2010).

Mahesh (2002) in his study focused factor with which the cellular phone customers are satisfied with service rendered by BPL, Aircel and Airtel to study the practices and preference for the use of mobile phones by the customers, he found that majority of the responds are satisfied with regard to rent and mode of payment.

Quality is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Thus, reaching the service quality without distinguishing the important aspects of quality is impossible. In his discussion of service quality, Gronroos (2000) refers to three dimensions of output technical quality, service performance quality, and organization's mental picture.

Service quality is a phenomenon with several dimensions. Service quality is defined as “the overall evaluation of a specific service firm that results from comparing that firm's performance with the customer's general expectations of how firms in that industry should perform” (PARASURAMAN *et al.* 1998).

Gremler and Brown (1996) defined customer loyalty as the extent to which a customer shows repeated purchasing from a service provider, possesses dispositions of positive attitude to the service provider, and visits the same service providers whenever there is a need or demand for similar service arises.

2.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Satisfaction and Expectation

Table 1. Level of Satisfaction.

PARTICULARS	HDS	DS	N	S	HS	TOTAL
Clinical Service	0	14	38	20	28	100
Clinical Supportive Service	0	15	28	38	18	100
Clinical-Administrative Services	0	21	25	33	21	100
Nursing Service	0	22	26	38	14	100
Reception Service	0	26	24	36	15	100
Infrastructure	0	21	28	29	21	100
House Keeping	0	12	15	45	28	100
Others	6	17	30	41	7	100

Source: Primary Data

Overall Most 38 percent of the respondents are neither satisfying nor dissatisfying on Clinical Service which provide by the particular hospitals, 38 per cent of the respondents are satisfying by Clinical Supportive Service, 33 percent of the respondents are satisfying with Administrative Services, 38 percent of the respondents are satisfying through Nursing Service, 36 percent of the respondents are satisfying by Reception Service, 45 percent of the respondents are satisfying with Infrastructure of particular hospitals, 45 percent of the respondents are satisfying through House Keeping and 41 percent of the respondents are satisfying by Others like Offer & concession, Health check-up plan, Outsider visiting hours, Medi-claim insurance and Accident care.

Table 2. Service Expectation.

PARTICULARS	NE	RE	N	E	HE	TOTAL
Senior / Experience Doctor	0	28	4	30	39	100
Effective Diagnosis Skill Of The Doctors	0	15	0	38	47	100
Doctors Loyalty	0	11	38	17	34	100
Doctors International Qualification & Exposure	0	11	33	52	4	100
Maintaining Patient Report Confidently	0	45	38	0	17	100
Nursing Care	0	40	43	17	0	100
Laboratory Facilities	0	14	34	34	17	100
Counseling Services	0	11	47	34	8	100
24-Hours Pharmacy Services	0	11	5	46	38	100
Latest Equipments	0	41	51	4	4	100
Reasonable Hospital Charges	0	11	4	21	64	100
Quick Billing	0	40	23	33	4	100
Parking Facilities	0	3	19	64	14	100
Crowded Management	0	11	43	22	23	100
Television & Other	0	11	45	24	20	100
Information Sent To Home	0	40	5	17	38	100
Attending Complaints	0	15	4	30	51	100

Source: Primary Data

Out of 300 respondents Majority 64 Percent of the respondents are Highly Expecting the Reasonable price Charged by the hospitals, and Parking facilities, 52 percent of the respondents are Expecting Doctors with International Qualification & Exposure, 51 percent of the respondents are expecting usage of Latest Equipments and Highly Expecting complaints handling, 47 percent of the respondents are expecting the benefit of Counseling Services and Highly

Expecting Effective Diagnosis Skill Of The Doctors, 46 percent of the respondents are expecting 24-Hours Pharmacy Services, 45 percent of the respondents are neither expecting nor rarely expecting the Television & Other facilities given by the hospitals and Maintaining Patient Report Confidently, 43 percent of the respondents are neither expecting nor rarely expecting Crowded Management, 40 percent of the respondents are Rarely Expecting that patient Information Sent To Home, Nursing Care and Quick Billing, 39 percent of the respondents are highly expecting Senior / Experience Doctor to consult and 34 percent of the respondents are Highly expecting Doctors Loyalty and Laboratory Facilities.

PROBLEM FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS**Table 3. Problem Faced By the Respondents.**

PARTICULARS	HF	NF	N	F	SF
Not up to the expectation	0	11	17	34	38
Poor service	0	50	33	17	0
Lack of specialist	0	11	21	0	69
Water problems	0	10	30	8	51
Attendance & sweepers	0	11	21	64	4
Lack of cleanliness	0	13	49	5	33
No proper treatment	4	11	17	69	0
Lack of latest treatment	0	15	39	47	0
No CRM (customer relationship management)	0	11	51	38	0

Source: Primary Data

Out of 300 respondents, Majority 69 percent of the respondents are facing lacks of specialist in the hospitals and not getting proper treatment sometime, 64 percent of the respondents are facing insufficient Attendance & sweepers, 51 percent of the respondents are Neither facing nor not facing with the problem of CRM (customer relationship management) and Strongly facing the water problems, 50 percent of the respondents are Neither facing nor not facing the Poor service by the particular hospitals, 49 percent of the respondents are satisfied by cleanliness of the hospitals and only most 47 percent of the respondents are Facing Lack of latest treatment used by the particular hospitals.

3. Conclusion

Marketing plays a pivotal role in growth and development of the country. The development of marketing as always kept place with the economic growth of the country. Now the modern marketing places the high competition in their activities, competition to the order of the day. Business men have started realizing it. Earning profit is possible only through consumer satisfaction.

To satisfy a consumer is needs have been known. This is possible only when information is collected from the consumers. That's why all modern marketing is a consumer oriented marketing. It being with consumer and ends with customer. The design of the study reveals that consumer satisfaction on the hospital awareness and customer satisfaction.

Thus the KMCH, PSG and G. Kuppasamy Naidu

Memorial Hospital have a high image in respect of quality and service for quick Recovery and at the same time Ramakrishna and KG has a good image in respect of price and service. Therefore the image surroundings a hospital's brand is the principle source of its competitive advantage of valuable strategic assets.

3.1. Limitation of the Study

- Sample size has been restricted to 300 samples due to time constraint and to provide an in-depth analysis.
- The details furnished by the respondents are considered as true and the study results are based on this assumption.
- Findings also declared that perceived quality of services was mainly dependant on the tangibility dimension confirming that the highest mean of patients' expectations was related to physical environment, equipment, payment process, and cleanliness.
- As this study is concerned to the respondents at Coimbatore district alone, this finding and suggestion are applicable only to Coimbatore city.
- To achieve the highest level of quality in hospital services and to determine current gaps, there is a need to evaluate and analyze patients' perceptions toward different quality dimensions and compare it with their expectations of service quality.

3.2. Recommendations

In this study, customer satisfaction has been taken into account which is a very important element for the success of any marketing. Our study can practically be used by service sectors in creating customer satisfaction. We suggest that by making customers feel satisfied, by establishing good relationship with customers through efficient customer services and satisfy with their expectations, would lead toward brand loyalty and simply by keeping the price fairness of services compatible a firm can establish long term profitable relationship with customers.

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