

PATIENT REACTIONS ON HOSPITAL SERVICES

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Abstract

In any service industry customer retention is a vital issue. In hospital scenario, the need to achieve patient satisfaction has made an important to health care marketing. This research is focused on patients' reactions towards the hospital services. The research has examined overall quality care services of the hospitals and the patient reactions towards recommendation behavior and willingness attitude to revisit. The overall quality care has been measured with six variables namely Admission process, Nursing care, Doctors care, Patient privacy, Communication and Innovation, and patient reactions behavior are also measured with willingness to recommend and willingness to revisit. The data has been collected from the patients who are taking treatment as a inpatient in the leading private hospitals in Chennai. The samples of 150 patients are approached for collecting information's as a stratified random sampling technique. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression are applied to study the research questions. It is found that doctors care, nurse care and admission process are the factors highly influenced the overall satisfaction of the patient. The patients are also expressed that they would like to recommend and revisit the hospital for taking treatment.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, Quality care, Recommendation, Revisit and Multiple regression.

Introduction

The hospital market has today changed from a sellers' market to a buyers' market, where, the patient is very much important. Therefore to achieve patient satisfaction, the hospital has to develop itself technologically, as well as become more service-oriented. A marketing orientation is therefore the need of the hour for the image upliftment of the hospital. The main task of a marketing orientation is to determine the needs and wants of their customers / patients and satisfies them through design, communication, pricing and delivery of appropriate and competitively viable products and services. A hospital's primary objectives are usually humanitarian, philosophical or regulatory and based on some perceived need. However, a problem may arise due to the difference of patient needs and wants. For instance, a patient needs from a hospital is reasonable good quality medical care. Yet market research over the

past few years has shown that hospitalized patients want a variety of amenities which are not associated with their need for reasonable good quality medical care. They want smiling, empathetic nurses and staff, a wide selection of foods for their meals and a quick response to their calls. Customer satisfaction in a hospital is basically a state of mind of the patient. It is the ability of the hospital service to meet the expectations of the patient. Customer delight is all about exceeding the expectations of the patients to make them highly satisfied with the hospital. In hospital perspective, customer is any individual or institution who is an actual, potential or future user of the hospital and its various services. The customer from the hospital is very different from the regular customer, the difference being that they do not want to be a customer in the first place. The hospital customer is forced to be a customer because of their illness and parts with their money unhappily.

Objective

The objective of research is to investigate the patient satisfaction towards the care received by them during their stay in the hospital as a inpatient. It is examined three patient outcomes namely, overall quality care, willingness to recommend and willingness to revisit. This study would help the health care management to compete better for the survival.

Methodology

The aim of the study was to examine patient experience relating to hospital care services, which they received during their stay in the hospital as an inpatient. The researcher has collected necessary information from the respondents of leading private general hospital in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. In Chennai, many numbers of leading private hospitals are there. The researcher has selected two hospitals, based on more percentage of recovery rates. Then the researcher approached the hospital team member and got the patients details, who are discharged before three months, because patients may recall, what actually they perceived in the hospital and their reactions after discharge. After that, the researcher has drawn a stratified random sample from all departments in each hospital. A sample of 150 respondents is considered in this study. The researcher made a phone call and got their prior appointment, then circulates the questionnaire. After a week, the researcher made a reminder through short message service, after their confirmations, the filled data was collected. The data collected during the month of June 2010. The collected data are coded and entered into SPSS 15 version.

Measuring Procedure

In this research, questionnaire has been developed to measure the patient reaction towards overall quality care received, willingness to recommend and willingness to revisit the hospital. These variables are treated as a dependent variable. The independent variables are related to attribute reaction consisted six variables such as, admission process, nursing care, doctors' care, patient privacy, communication and innovation technology. Dependent and independent variables are asked in the likert five point scale. Where five stands for strongly agree and one stands for strongly disagree. Demographic characters age, gender, education, income and are consider as a control variable. In order to answer the research objective, descriptive statistics and multiple regression are applied.

Results And Discussion

Table-1 Patient opinion towards Hospital Service Care

S.NO	SERVICE CARE	MEAN	SD
1	Admission process	4.29	0.82
2	Nurse care	4.18	0.86
3	Doctors care	4.38	0.89
4	Patient privacy	4.12	1.08
5	Communication	3.78	0.84
6	Innovation	3.92	0.92
7	Overall service care	4.13	0.81
8	Recommendation	4.46	0.95
9	Willingness to recommend	4.58	1.02

Source: primary data computed

The patient perceived score on hospital care is explained in the table-1. Mean score and standard deviation value is calculated for the each dimensions of the service care and outcome variables. From the values, it is observed that the doctors provide the best treatment, honestly, friendly, available on time and clarifying doubts. It is scored the highest mean value of 4.38. Standard deviation value (0.89) indicates that the respondent rates were almost similar. The mean score of admission process was 4.29 and standard deviation value was 0.82. It shows that the admission processes are handled promptly and properly, minimum waiting time to meet the doctors, easy access of emergency care services and getting the desired bed on admission. Nurse care services got the mean score of 4.18. The patients are satisfied with the nurse care services of the hospital. Patient are perceived that nurses are always helpful and supportive, spend sufficient time with the patient and they are emotional and physically well being. Hospital management allowed home-making courts for the patient and high level of privacy. It secured mean value of 4.12 and standard deviation value is 1.08. It is observed that the communication process and availability of innovation technology got least level of satisfaction. The respective mean value was 3.78 and 3.92. It shows that the hospitals were lacking with the clear invoice, intercom facilities to contact the patient and clarity of instruction. It is also lacking with appointment and transaction through online and telemedicine facilities.

The overall service quality satisfaction of the patient was 4.13. It is indicated that the patient are received excellent quality of services, when he/she stayed in the hospital as an inpatient. The mean score of willingness to recommend this hospital to their family and friends was 4.46. Willingness to revisit this hospital mean score was 4.58. It is clearly explained that the patient are received the best care services and they are very much satisfied with the service providers quality. So that, they are willing to recommend this hospital to their family members, relatives and friends to take treatment. And also, if necessity to take treatment, they would like to prefer this hospital only.

Table-2 Predictors of Overall Quality care

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	STANDARDIZED β -VALUE	P-VALUE
Overall quality care $R^2 = 0.628$ $P = 0.01$	Admission process	0.112	0.001*
	Nurse care	0.291	0.005**
	Doctors care	0.326	0.001*
	Patient privacy	-0.068	0.008(NS)
	Communication	-0.086	0.001*
	Innovation	0.026	0.001*

Source: primary data computed, *significance at one percent level, **significance at five percent level, NS-Non significant.

The aim of the study was to examine, how patients are reacted to overall quality care, willingness to recommend their relatives and families and willingness to revisit the same hospital. In order to evaluate the patient reaction towards these variables, multiple linear regression is applied. Table-2 explains the predictor of overall quality care experienced by the patient is observed that overall quality is influenced by independent variables about 62.8 percent. It is significant at one percent level. The standardized co-efficient beta value indicates the relative importance to the predictors' level of overall quality care. It is observed that doctors' care showed the strongest influence on overall quality care. Nursing care and admission process were also predicting the overall quality care. The corresponding p-values indicate that patient reactions are significantly varied from one percent to five percent level. Communication is negatively influencing the overall quality. Innovation was a least predictors of overall quality care.

Table-3 predictors of willingness to recommendation

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	STANDARDIZED β -VALUE	P-VALUE
Willingness to recommendation $R^2 = 0.642$ $P = 0.001$	Admission process	0.032	0.001*
	Nurse care	0.228	0.005**
	Doctors care	0.392	0.001*
	Patient privacy	-0.021	0.001*
	Communication	0.004	0.052(NS)
	Innovation	0.012	0.001*

Source: primary data computed, *significance at one percent level, **significance at five percent level, NS-Non significant.

When the patients are satisfied with the overall service of the hospital, they recommend the hospital to their families, relatives and friends. The reason for willingness to recommend

of the sample respondents was explained in table-3. In order to indentify the predictors of the recommendation attributes, stepwise multiple regression is employed. **Application of stepwise multiple regression itself shows the effect of other variables and gives opt beta value.** Admission process, Nursing care, Doctors care, Patient privacy, Communication and Innovation are the factors jointly influence the respondents to recommend this hospital at 64.2 percent level. The p-value indicates that the respondents' opinion is significantly varied at one percent level. Standardized beta value is helpful to identify among the independent variables, which was a strong predictor of respondent reaction towards recommendation behavior. Doctors' care and admission process are the strongest predictors of recommendation behavior and nursing care also influenced the respondent's to their reactions. But availability of technology was a weak predictor. Patient privacy negatively influenced by the respondents on recommendation behavior. It is understand that the respondents are received excellent doctors' care, admission process and nursing care services. But, they were experienced poor communication, non availability of latest facility and patient privacy. Communication and patient privacy are the important factors for patient. Because, as they are the patient, they have more stress, regarding their health. As a part of treatment, the management should clearly communicate, what had happen, what is the status of treatment, what is going on, and build a confidence to their patient with proper communication. Patient should allow their privacy. Suppose, their relatives may come and want to see the patient, the management may allow them, because, when the patients see their relatives, their stress level may be reduced or they may get confidence. Self confidence might be curing the disease. When the management have proper communication and provide the patient privacy, they positively tell about the hospital.

Table-4 Predictors of Willingness to Revisit

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	STANDARDIZED β -VALUE	P-VALUE
Willingness to revisit $R^2 = 0.526$ $P = 0.001$	Admission process	0.426	0.001*
	Nurse care	0.321	0.001*
	Doctors care	0.428	0.005**
	Patient privacy	0.022	0.005**
	Communication	0.008	0.001*
	Innovation	0.031	0.001*

Source: primary data computed, *significance at one percent level, **significance at five percent level.

The respondent reaction towards willingness to revisit the same hospital for taking treatment is explained in the table-4. Willingness to revisit the same hospital was explained by the independent variables at 52.6 percent. The p-value indicates that the respondents' reaction is significantly varied at one percent level. The standardized co-efficient value indicates the relative importance to the predictors' level of willingness to revisit the hospital for taking treatment if necessary arise. Doctors' care is ranked first by the respondents followed by admission process

and nurse care. Communication has got least predictors of revisiting behavior. The patients are experienced that the hospital has well qualified and committed doctors and other supporting staff. Hence, they are reacted positively towards revisit the same hospital for taking treatment. But, there is a problem in communication and innovation technology.

When comparing the patient reaction on overall quality care, recommendation and revisit, patient are received excellent doctors and nursing care service, but, they perceived the hospital has poor communication and updated technology.

Discussion And Conclusion

It is essential for a hospital to reach out to its patients, if it wants to survive the competition. This can be achieved only by building a bridge of trust between the hospital and the community, so that the community can crossover to the hospital. One needs to understand the fact that patients do not flock to a hospital just because its services are cheap, but because of its good name and good image. To achieve patient satisfaction the hospitals have to realize the importance of healthcare marketing. Hospitals are making efforts to determine what healthcare customers need, tailoring their services to meet those needs and then attracting patients to use these services. In a hospital scenario, marketing is essential at every point. Every member of the hospital has to be an active agent in satisfying and delighting the patient, which would translate into a source of strength for the community and the hospital.

The result of the overall quality care, willingness to recommend and willingness to revisit explained that the quality care and willingness to recommend almost similar but willingness to revisit differed by the patients. Communication, availability of innovation technology and patient privacy are should be improved by the hospital management. The satisfied patient may ring their relatives and friends and also they act as a brand ambassador. Evaluation of overall quality care, willingness to recommend and willingness to revisit are unique, which helps the hospital management to develop appropriate strategy to sustain the market. In the competitive environment, service providers should frequently evaluate themselves; otherwise, the followers can capture the market.

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