An Empirical Study on Consumer Preference with Reference to Meenakshi Mission Hospital

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Abstract

The quality of service is the most deciding factor to a consumer to choose a hospital. The advancement in the medical treatment service is increasing rapidly. The cure with reasonable price leads to customer satisfaction. The consumer tend to comment positively only if their expectation is fulfilled. This research understands the reason for preferring Meenakshi mission hospital and the opinion of the patients and also aims to study the satisfaction level and consumer expectation towards the hospital. The data were collected from 120 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The tools used for analysis were descriptive analysis, chi-square test and anova – test. The study infers that the consumers are happy with the majority factors except few attributes. This study suggests few measures to improve the marketing practices.

Key words: Customer satisfaction, expectation, marketing practices, consumer preferences.

1. Introduction

Astoundingly growing population and shortage of health care services provider are the important bottle necks for the growth of the rapid expansion of population and shortage of healthcare facilities in government hospitals and private hospitals in the society have been playing a vital role. Even though there are many hospitals which are providing health service to the populace of the region, the service rendered is in adequate in terms of quality and quantity. The demand of health services in private hospitals is creasing day by day because of the certain factors like better amenities and facilities provided to the customer visiting a private hospital will speak itself the difference one can find from the government

help. Preference of the customer for the selection of a hospital varies from patient to patient. It also varies from time to time the variation may be due to several reasons. Preference may be because of locations of the hospitals, cost involvement in the treatment infrastructure available with the hospitals, peer suggestion doctor's reference etc.

1.1 Concepts involved in the Research

Consumer satisfaction and acceptance are often considered in the literature to be closely linked yet these are distinct concepts Satisfaction is the fulfillment and gratification of the need for a stated good or service. A business term is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation and making them satisfied. The degree to which there is match between the customer's expectations of the product and the actual performance of the product. The customer who gets highly satisfied will become a repetitive customer and he explains about this product to others also satisfied customers help to retain the sales & services.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Today is the world of inventions and innovations and that lies in a customer who is dynamic and his beliefs attitude and his satisfaction level. This research mainly deals with knowing customer preference and this study may provide some information about what qualities do the customer expect from hospital and what are all the factors they consider during selecting the hospital. Hence an attempt has been made to know the preference of customer towards Meenakshi Mission Hospital, Madurai.

1.3 Objective of the Research

  i.   To find out the reasons for selecting the Meenakshi Mission Hospital.

  ii. To know the customer preference and satisfaction level of respondents towards the service offered by Meenakshi Mission Hospital.

  iii. To understand the expectation and requirements of customers from Meenakshi Mission Hospital.

  iv. To assign valid suggestions based on findings

1.4 Research Hypothesis

a.   There is no significant difference between Income Group and Overall Satisfaction.

b.   There is no significant difference between Age and Overall Satisfaction

c.   There is no significant association exist between Education Qualification and Overall Satisfaction.

d.   There is no significance difference between marital statuses with regards to sources of stress.

e.   There is no significance difference between marital statuses with regards to sources of stress.

1.5 Scope and Limitation.

The study is conducted at Meenakchi mission hospital, Madurai, India and this study attempts to describe the reasons for preferring the hospital and opinion of the consumers towards various services offered by the hospital. This research offers scope for improving the marketing practices of Meenakshi mission Hospital. The findings of the study can applied to any health care sector which operates under similar socio economic situations. This study offers means to implement new ideas to improve satisfaction level to the customer. This study shall through light on the performance of the hospital and problems met by the customers.

Limitations

As the study is focused on a single multispecialty the findings of the study cannot be generalized. The study was conducted under the assumption that the information given by the respondent is authentic. The chance of biased response can't be eliminated though all necessary steps were taken to avoid the same.

2.   Review of Literature

Gray, B.and Boshoff,C.,(2004), The objective of this study was to investigate whether superior service quality and superior transaction specific customer satisfaction will enhance loyalty (as measured by purchasing intentions) among patients in the private health care industry. The research design allowed an assessment of the relative impact of individual

dimensions of service quality and transaction-specific customer satisfaction on two dependent variables, namely loyalty (as measured by intentions to repurchase) and customer satisfaction, the latter measured as 'overall' or cumulative satisfaction. The results reveal that the service quality dimensions Empathy of nursing staff and Assurance impact positively on both Loyalty and Cumulative satisfaction. The customer satisfaction dimensions Satisfaction with meals, Satisfaction with the nursing staff and Satisfaction with fees all impact positively on both Loyalty and Cumulative satisfaction.

Mustafa, Nermeen and et al, (2018), conducted a study on hospital and observed that waiting time in hospitals has a sensitive issue; it also acts as a significant indicator to the quality of service. They also studied the impact of waiting time on patient perception which leads to satisfaction in hospitals. The research examines the moderating role of gender and its relationship with waiting time, perception, and also satisfaction. Using regression modeling, they have analyzed survey data which were collected from hospitals in United Arab Emirates. The findings confirmed that the waiting time impacts on perception and satisfaction of service quality. The findings of the study also revealed that the waiting time influences the gender, patients' perception and satisfaction in different ways. Rama Koteswara Rao Kondasani, Rajeev Kumar Panda, (2015), the purpose of this paper is to analyze how perceived service quality and customer satisfaction lead to loyalty towards healthcare service providers. The study was conducted among five private hospitals in India and survey was done from 475 hospital patients. In this research the research has employed descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and factor analysis and correlation statistics to analyze the customer perceived service quality and how it leads to loyalty towards the service providers. It was observed that the service seeker-service provider relationship, quality of facilities and the interaction with supporting staff have a positive effect on customer perception. The finding of the research helps healthcare management to formulate effective strategies and to ensure a better quality of services. This study guides the healthcare managers to build customer loyalty towards healthcare services which leads to customer's attraction and gaining more customers.

Arasy alimudin, (2017), Health service is highly demanded by public therefore it need to be balanced with the development of health care providers. The development of health care provider plays important role in determining service satisfaction. The hospitals which are not able to offer excellent quality of service will lose their customer value and trust which shall lead to customer dissatisfaction. The present study aims to understand the impact of service quality and confidence among the value of patient in relation to patient satisfaction. This present research utilizes 100 patients of inpatient hospital clinic in Surabaya as respondents in which the daya is analyzed by using Structural Equation Model analysis technique. The result revealed that the direct effect of service quality on satisfaction is negligible than the indirect influence of service quality on customer satisfaction through value. Furthermore, direct effect of trust on satisfaction is smaller than indirect effect of trust on satisfaction through customer value.

Dudung Juhana and et al., (2015), attempted to study effect of quality services and brand image on patient satisfaction and patient loyalty on public hospital in Bandung, Indonesia. The data were collected through questionnaires. This study employee Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analysis the degree of closeness of the studied variables through second order estimation methods of confirmatory factor analysis in order to determine the impact of direct variable and indirect independent variable. The study reveals show that the service quality influences the satisfaction through brand image and service quality. At the same time, service quality and brand image also affected patient's satisfaction level at public hospital in Bandung, Indonesia. Thus, patient satisfaction affected patient loyalty. The result of the research supports the previous research which states that the service quality, image influences on customer satisfaction and patient's loyalty. The implication of this study was that, the manager of a hospital needs to improve service quality and brand image so that patient satisfaction level can be improved, which thereby can gain patient loyalty. Syed Saad Andaleeb, (1998), States that rapid changes in the environment have exerted significant pressures on hospitals to incorporate patient satisfaction in their strategic stance and quest for market share and long term viability. This study proposes and tests a five factor model that explains considerable variation in customer satisfaction with

hospitals. These factors include communication with patients, competence of the staff, their demeanour, quality of the facilities, and perceived costs; they also represent strategic concepts that managers can address in their bid to remain competitive. Probability sample method was applied and a multiple regression model was employed to test the hypothesis. The result revealed that all the five variables were significant in the model and also explained that there was 62 per cent of the variation in the dependent variable.

Syed SaadAndaleeb, (2001), Patients' perceptions about health services seem to have been largely ignored by health care providers in developing countries. Such perceptions, especially the service quality, would shape confidence and subsequent behaviors in connection to choice and the usage of available health care facilities reflected in fact with many patient's. Patients' voice must begin to play a greater role in the design of health care service delivery processes in the developing countries. This research is, therefore, patient-centered and also studies the service quality factors that are significant to the patients; it also studies the links to patient satisfaction in the context of Bangladesh. A survey was conducted from patients on several dimensions of perceived service quality such as responsiveness, assurance, communication, discipline, and baksheesh. By using factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, significant associations between the five dimensions and patient satisfaction were found.

Ikechukwu E Obi, et al, (2018), The study was conducted at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), located between Ituku and Ozalla towns of Enugu, south-east Nigeria, between September and December 2015. The patients interviewed fall in the category between the ages of 20 and 65 years. Out of 239 respondents who were approached for exit interviews initiated, 170 respondents showed consent which was 71% of response rate. There were 54.1% females and 45.9% males in all that participated in the study. They were mostly public servants (47.6%), those engaged in business (27.1%) and unemployed or students (25.3%). Most of the respondents were educated only to the tertiary level (48.3%). More than half of the respondents have agreed that the hospital environment was clean (51.8%) and similarly 62.4 % have opined that there were constant and fair power supplies in the hospital. Only below half of the respondents, expressed satisfaction with other facilities of the hospital environment, like availability of water

(18.8%), neatness of bathrooms and toilets (14.7%), supply of good and affordable food (32.9%) and comforts provided to accommodate their relatives (14.1%). It was observed that doctors were courteous and professional (90%). Doctors always listen to the complaints (90.6%) and also always explained the reasons for taking tests (74.1%). More than half of the respondents considered the nurses (64.1%) and the records department staff (60.6%) courteous and professional as well. Likely similar numbers of respondents were also satisfied with the level of privacy provided in the stay of the hospital (67.6%). Some respondents have expressed satisfaction with the pharmacy (41.8%) and on the medical laboratory staff (43.5%). It is observed that the overall experience on admission were not satisfactory. The hospital shall maintain cleanliness and provision of power needed. Cleanliness at bathrooms and toilets shall be taken care. Effect of staff attitude on satisfaction is varied; while the attitude of doctors, nurses, and records staff were positive, the attitude of pharmacy staffs and medical laboratory staff needed to be improved. Admission processes, clinic, laboratory and pharmacy waiting times, promptness of laboratory results and availability of functional equipment and drugs also need, as a feedback from the survey, to be reviewed.

Prasanna, K., Bashith, M., & Sucharitha, S. (2009) the availability of services and clinical care was found to be satisfactory. It is found that 81% of the respondents have expressed positive comments on doctors. Like how 97% of the respondents were satisfied about the explanation given by the doctor about the disease. The time required for consulting the doctor was satisfactory but the time spent in pharmacy was satisfactory. Recommendations are required for reduction of time spent in the pharmacy and the cost of investigations to improve consumer satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

Since this research focuses to describe the situation about preference and opinion about the hospital, this study is descriptive in nature and hence this type of research is descriptive research. Descriptive study is undertaken in order to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of the variables of interest in a situation. The researcher comprises the activities related to defining the problems, formulating the hypotheses or suggested solutions, collecting organization and evaluating data, making discussions and reaching conclusions. The current study is based on convenience sampling. In this research the researcher has used convenience sampling technique to sort out the samples from the

total universe. The target population would be sampled. The customers of Meenakshi Mission Hospital are chosen as a population target. The sample size chosen for the research is 120 samples. Both the primary data and secondary data are utilized in this study. A structured questionnaire is used to collect the primary date. The questionnaire consists of demographic details about the respondents, also questions related to doctors approach, nursing care, medical care, room facilities, lab facilities, special treatment, pharmacy facilities, canteen facilities, parking facilities and ambulance facilities were included. Likert five point scaling is used to measure the opinion on the services of the patients. Tools used for analysis in this study are Simple percentage analysis, Weighted Average method, Rank correlation, Chi-square analysis, One-way ANOVA.

4. Discussion

From the analysis it is inferred that 54% of respondents were male and 46% of respondents were female and 11% of the respondents were in the category of 20-30 years. 34% of the respondents were in the category of 21-30 years. 37% of the respondents were between 31-40 years of age and 18% of the respondents were above 40 years of age. From the study it was inferred that 69% of the respondents were married and 31% were unmarried. Similarly 14% of the respondents have their education up to SSLC and below. 20% of the respondents have their education up to HSC, 17% of the respondents have their education up to Diploma, and 34% of respondents have completed under graduation and 15% of the respondents have completed Post graduation. It was also inferred that 23% of the respondents fall below the category of Rs.15000 income, 30% of the respondents fall between the income group of Rs.21000 to Rs.30000 and 12% of the respondent's income fall above Rs 30,000. Among 120 respondents met it was observed that 21% of the respondents were student, 11% of the respondents were businessmen, 31% of the respondents were private employees, and 11% of the respondents were government employees.

It was observed that 23% of the respondents were referred by doctors, 47% of the respondents were referred by family members and 24% were approached the hospital due

to advertisement. The factor influencing to choose the hospital was studied and it was observed that 29% choose due to experienced doctors, 20% choose due to economy, 33% choose due to excellent service and 17% choose due to good infrastructure and facilities. It was a good sign to understand that all the members were willing to recommend the hospital to others. 52% of respondents possess Medical / Health insurance policy, 48% of respondents do not posses. 52% of the respondents and 31% of the respondents have agreed that the bill was reasonable whereas only 3% of the respondents have disagreed that the billing was reasonable. It was inferred that 42% of the respondents were getting treatment in the hospital for more than 20days.

For various reasons the patients were choosing the hospital, it was found that 24% of the respondents opt the hospital for quality and other facilities each. 26% of the patients' approach this hospital since it is a multispecialty hospital and 16% of the patients approach the hospital because the hospital possesses experienced doctors.

4.1 Opinion on the attributes of the hospital

It was understood that 60% and 31% of the respondents have opined the doctor's approach was excellent and very good respectively. Similarly 64% of the respondents have opined that the nurse were very caring. Likewise 39% have opined that the medical care was good and 21% have opined that the medical care was excellent. 32% have opined neutral and 5% have opined poor about room facilities. Only 7% all other have opined that the lab facilities were good. For the opining regarding pharmacy facilities, 13% of the respondents opined it is Excellent, 33% of the respondents opined that it is very good and 36% of the respondents opined that Pharmacy Facilities is good, 16% of the respondents opined that Pharmacy Facilities is Poor, 2% of the respondents opined that Pharmacy Facilities is very poor. Similarly 24% of the respondents have opined that the canteen facilities were poor and 21% of the respondents have opined that the ambulance facility was poor. As a majority 66% of the respondents have opinioned that the parking facility was good. It I also observed that 97% of the respondents were satisfied overall.

4.2 Discussion on weighted average on various attributes

The above study reveals that doctor approach is ranked first with the weighted average of 36.06, special treatment is ranked second with the weighted average of 33.06, medical care is ranked third with the weighted average of 30.46, nursing care is ranked fourth with the weighted of 30.33, and room facilities is ranked fifth with weighted average score of 30.26, lab facilities is ranked six with the weighted average of 29.06, pharmacy facilities is ranked seven with the weighted average of 27.13, ambulance service is ranked eight with the weighted average of 26.86, canteen facilities is ranked nine with the weighted of 25.6, and finally parking facilities is ranked ten with weighted average score of 24.66.

4.3 Discussion on application of Chi-Square Analysis on Variables

It is inferred that there is association between exist between income group and overall satisfaction. Similarly it is concluded that there is association between exist between age and overall Satisfaction. It is understood that there is association between education qualification and overall satisfaction.

5. Suggestions

The security system in the hospital can be improved by providing securities to each floor in the hospital premises. More number of staffs can be appointed in the reception area so that the staffs at the reception area can guide the patients. The infrastructure of the hospital has to be improved so that the attenders of the patients are also comfortably accommodated. The canteen in the hospital can serve more variety of food that matches the diet of the patients. The insurance department shall process the claims of the patients faster to so that the patients can be benefited more by this department. The hospital must focus more on patient relationship management by including this as a part of the treatment process. A separate department can be organized to analyze and manage the satisfaction level of patients which would improve the hospital to hold a good opinion among the patients and the public

6. Conclusion

Service industry is growing rapidly in India. It has contributed too much of the country's economic development. The main aim of every organization should be to offer quality service. In this regard service quality plays vital role for market capitalization. In industry like hospitals, where there exists stiff competition the service provider should look for continuous improvisation. If it is being done, then there are chances to increase the patient's satisfaction level of Meenakshi Mission. Since they are providing quality services to patients in and around Madurai there are chances to more people shall approach from down south and even from other state of the country.

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