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DETERMINANTS OF PATIENTS SATISFACTION HEALTH CARE SERVICES – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY TO PRIVATE HOSPITALS AT THANJAVUR DISTRICT IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT:

Over the past several years, the issue of patient satisfaction has gained increasing attention from executives across the healthcare industry. As a result, industry leaders have been focusing their attention on improving patient/customer satisfaction through various initiatives. However, despite their many efforts and successes, evidence shows that more work in this area is still needed. One of the primary challenges has been in sustaining enthusiasm for and focusing on patient/customer satisfaction projects in view of "competing priorities, shrinking resources, and an increasingly frustrated patient and employee/physician population". This study was conducted to investigate the level of satisfaction of the patients in private hospitals. This study was about private hospitals in Tanjavur District. The researcher selected 04 reputed private hospitals in Thanjavur District were analyzed with the help of many questions. The number of respondents involved the research was 600 respondents, 150 from each hospital. Private hospitals obtained better ratings than public hospitals on most of the measures of patient satisfaction & health care service quality.

KEYWORDS: Service Quality, Health Care, Patients Satisfaction, Confirmative Factor Analysis.

INTRODUCTION:

In the 1980's the entry norms for Private players in the Health services industry was relaxed by the Government. The private healthcare facilities are owned and run by for profit companies, non profit or charitable organizations. The entry of private sector has opened a gamut of opportunities for India in terms of Medical Equipment, Information technology in health services, BPO, Telemedicine and Medical and Health Tourism. An estimate around 300,000 "Medical Tourists" visited India last year, representing a 20 per cent jump over the previous year. Though the private sector has been responsible in bringing about the desired changes in the health industry, the health sector performance requires much improvement in

comparison with other emerging economies, including most comparable nations in the region. Deficiencies persist with respect to access, affordability, efficiency, quality and effectiveness, despite the high level of overall private and public expenditure on health. Thanjavur District has a good hospital network covering both rural and urban area. The quality of service in general is inherent importance in any society. The world's raising population and increasing standard of living have driven significant growth within a global hospital sector, has consumer have began to demand better hospital facility to support their life, long and healthy life is one of the basic dimension of human development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Patient satisfaction has been considered as one of the most important quality dimensions and key success indicators in health care (Pakdil & Harwood, 2005; Pollack, 2008).

Customer satisfaction is about nurturing and meeting customer preferences and expectation to enhance customer-delivered value (Oakland, 2000; Owusu-Frimpong, Nwankwo, & Dason, 2010).

Patient satisfaction is referred as the judgement made by a recipient of care as to whether their expectations for care have been met or not (Palmer, Donabedian, & Pover, 1991).

Patient satisfaction with medical care is a multidimensional concept, with a dimension that corresponds to the major characteristics of providers and services (Ware, Snyder, Wright, & Davies, 1983; Donahue, Piazza, Griffin, Dykes, & Fitzpatrick, 2008; More, Rochedreux, Chevalier, Lombrai, & Gasquet, 2008; Abdul Majeed, Habib, & Rafiqul, 2011).

Within the health care industry, patient satisfaction can be considered as an important component and measure of the quality of care (Salisbury et al., 2005). Patient satisfaction is a cumulative construct which embraces satisfaction with various hospital facets such as technical, functional, infrastructure, interaction and atmosphere (Zineldine, 2006).

Patient satisfaction plays an important role in the continuity of service utilization (Thomas, 1994), and positively influences the patient's trust (Moliner, 2009; Alrubaiee & Alkaa'ida, 2011).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today's changing, and developing global world, both service and manufacturing companies are confronted with a fundamental business challenge, survival and success in a turbulent and increasingly competitive environment. This competition focuses on before and after sales services rather than products' attributes and manufacturing. Today, health care service industries are dominant in developed countries even though health care services are among the fastest growing sector in emerging countries, and the importance of health care service to the economy continues to increase. Due to phenomenal growth of the health service sector in modern society, the importance of service management and health care service quality is also expected to increase. The role of health care service quality is widely recognized as being a critical determinant for the success and survival of an organization in today's competitive environment. Any decline in patient satisfaction due to poor service quality would be a matter of concern. Patients are becoming more aware of rising standards in service, prompted by competitive trends, which have developed higher expectations. The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the satisfaction factors, which determine patient's satisfaction of health care service quality, and to examine the causal relationship between health care service quality and patient satisfaction in 4 hospitals in Thanjavur District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ⊕ To determine the level of patient's satisfaction on the health care services offered by private hospital in Thanjavur District.
- ⊕ To identify the factors influencing patient's satisfaction.
- ⊕ To suggest suitable measures to enhance patient's satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

i. Sample Design

The stratified multistage sampling method is adopted for the present study. Thanjavur District has been selected by using the convenient random sampling method. The respondents have been selected based on convenient sampling method. The data have been collected from the 600 patients from 4 hospitals and each 150 who are selected by the convenient sampling method.

ii. Collection of Data

The study has been done from large sample of patients in Thanjavur District. Survey method is the best

approach for a quantitative research, with the help of a structured interview schedule. It helps to understand the possible relationships between the data and the unknowns in the universe. An interview schedule has been used as the instrument for collecting the research data.

iii. Frame Work of Analysis

The data is first presented in tabular and graphical form representing the different responses given by the patients. Then analysis is done using following statistical tools.

The study is a primary research conducted through a survey consisting of 600 respondents (patients) in Thanjavur District. A well structured Interview schedule was used for data collection. Secondary data was obtained from bulletins, brochures, articles, web collections, reference books, newspapers and publications of insurance companies. Simple percentage and Confirmative factor analysis were employed for data analysis. Satisfaction Index is computed to know the level of satisfaction of the respondents on the health care services provided by private hospitals. Respondents have given their opinion on Assistance in filling up the form, Understandable conditions, Features of the hospital, hospital charges, Mode of payment, payment option, Employees and nurse services, health care services and facilities, Doctor's approach, canteen facilities etc., The response of the patient's satisfaction is rated on a Five – Point Scale. The answers to the question range from 1 to 5.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the limitations are common to almost all the studies in social survey, the present study is also subject to certain limitations. The study covers only the patients health care services of private hospital in Thanjavur city only. The study does not cover the Government hospitals.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Sample Descriptions

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are that majority of the respondents (32.5%) belong to age group of above 51. This reveals old persons are more patients. The data further reveled that males (66%) and females (34%) have been distributed. More than one-fourth (28.5%) of the respondents are Illiterate, followed by post graduates (25.3%). Most of the respondents (29.2%) are Private employee followed by Government employee (21.2%). As far as the income level is concerned, most of the respondents (62.3%) belong to the income group of upto rupees 25000. Most of the respondents (79.2%) are married, the majority of the respondents (58.7%) are from nuclear family and the most of the respondents are (63%) living urban areas.

Data Analysis

In this study the researchers have made use of factor analysis for identifying the important health care service factors. Identifying the factor analysis has been used to identify the effect of various factors on patient's satisfaction of health care services. The respondents were offered to answer five point scale where '5' meant "highly satisfied" and '1' meant "Highly dissatisfied". The data on the 44 variables are analyzed using the principle axis factoring method. The number of factors can be obtained by Kaiser's criterion which recommends retaining all factors with eigen values greater than 1. In this study KMO value is 0.717 which is more than the general rule (0.5). Bartlett's test of sphericity is to find out the relationship between the variables. A p- value is < 0.05 indicates that it makes sense to continue with the factor analysis, therefore it is concluded that there are relationships between the variables. . The results of the rotated factor matrix are interpreted by paying attention to which variables had greater loadings in individual factors. The nine factors extracted together account for 66.882 per cent of total variance. The results are presented in the table No.1

Table – 1

| Factors | Policy Holders Service Variables | Factor loading | Reliability Co-efficient | Eigen Value | Percent of Variation |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Doctor's Service | | 0.934 | 8.089 | 18.385 | |
| | You felt safe in the hands of the doctors. | 0.891 | | | |
| | Doctors explained the test results. | 0.832 | | | |
| | It was easy to get a bed/cabin. | 0.812 | | | |
| | Treatment outcome was good for you. | 0.797 | | | |
| | Doctors provided correct treatment the first time | 0.775 | | | |
| | Doctors followed up on the treatment. | 0.764 | | | |
| | You were pleased with the hospital's services. | 0.7000 | | | |
| | Nurses were caring. | 0.698 | | | |
| | Nurses communicated patients' needs to doctors. | 0.604 | | | |
| | Doctor was willing to answer any question. | 0.588 | | | |
| | Doctors were clean in appearance | 0.582 | | | |
| | Hospital was visually appealing. | 0.555 | | | |
| | Doctors explained the purpose of the diagnostic tests. | 0.549 | | | |
| General & Other Service | | | 0.886 | 5.427 | 12.335 |
| | Doctor was caring. | 0.771 | | | |
| | Nurses were quite willing to respond when needed. | 0.733 | | | |
| | Doctors provided logical answers to questions about my condition. | 0.707 | | | |
| | Hospitals had adequate number of doctors | 0.658 | | | |
| | In future, if you feel unwell, you will return to this hospital for services. | 0.628 | | | |
| | Doctor gave clear advice to patients about the prescriptions. | 0.619 | | | |
| | Doctors were competent in diagnosing the problem. | 0.616 | | | |
| | Operation theatre and instruments were clean. | 0.574 | | | |
| | Nurses administered treatment in a timely manner. | 0.544 | | | |
| Cost | | | 0.835 | 3.335 | 7.579 |
| | Drug cost was high. | 0.869 | | | |
| | Accommodation cost was high. | 0.854 | | | |
| | Doctors' consultation fee was high. | 0.733 | | | |
| Process & Conditions | | | 0.574 | 2.421 | 5.502 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Doctor appropriately discussed your previous condition. | 0.867 | | | |
| | Hospital premises were neat and clean. | 0.821 | | | |
| | A higher price had to be paid to obtain better nursing service. | 0.661 | | | |
| | Hospitals had adequate number of nurses | 0.615 | | | |
| Caring | | | 0.591 | 2.269 | 5.157 |
| | Travel cost was high. | 0.807 | | | |
| | Doctor listened to you attentively | 0.726 | | | |
| | You would recommend the services of this hospital to your friends/relatives. | 0.589 | | | |
| | Nurses attended to you sincerely when needed. | 0.536 | | | |
| Maintenance | | | 0.547 | 2.251 | 5.116 |
| | Patient records were well maintained. | 0.761 | | | |
| | Cabin/ward, beds and floors were clean. | 0.547 | | | |
| Additional fees | | | 0.538 | 1.996 | 4.536 |
| | To receive good service required payment of Baksheesh (extra payment) | 0.730 | | | |
| | Lab test fee was high. | 0.507 | | | |
| Staff Sincerity | | | 0.535 | 1.880 | 4.273 |
| | Toilets and bathrooms were clean. | 0.856 | | | |
| | Patient release procedure was properly followed. | 0.637 | | | |
| | Nurses attended to you sincerely when needed. | 0.546 | | | |
| Appearance | | | 0.532 | 1.759 | 3.999 |
| | Nurses were clean in appearance | 0.654 | | | |
| | Health care centers had modern equipment. | 0.653 | | | |
| Total percent of variation | | | | | 66.882 |
| KMO measure of sampling Adequacy 0.717 | Barlettes Test of Shericity : Chi-square – 2069.56 * Degree of freedom : 946 *Significant at 1 percent level | | | | |

The most important factor for satisfaction is the 'Doctor's Service' factor. It consists of thirteen variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.934. You felt safe in the hands of the doctors has the highest load of 0.891, Doctors explained the test results is loaded as 0.832, it was easy to get a bed is loaded as 0.812, Treatment outcome was good for you is loaded as 0.797, Doctors provided correct treatment the first time is loaded as 0.775 and Doctors followed up on the treatment is loaded as 0.764, You were pleased with the hospital's services is loaded as 0.700, Nurses were caring is loaded as 0.698, Nurses communicated patients' needs to doctors is loaded as 0.604 and Doctor was willing to answer any question is loaded as 0.588, Doctors were clean in appearance is loaded as 0.582, Hospital was visually appealing is loaded as 0.555 and Doctors explained the purpose of the diagnostic tests is loaded as 0.549 on the factor 1. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation explained by this factor are 8.089 and 18.385 per cent respectively. The second important factor is 'General and other Services' which consists of nine variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.886. Doctor as caring has the highest load of 0.771, Nurses were quite willing to respond when needed is loaded as 0.733, Doctors provided logical answers to questions about my condition are loaded as 0.707, Hospitals had adequate number of doctors is loaded as 0.658, in future, if you feel well, you will return to this hospital for services is loaded as 0.628, Doctor gave clear advice to patients about the prescriptions is loaded as Doctors were competent in diagnosing the problem and Operation theatre and instruments were clean is loaded as 0.574 and Nurses administered

treatment in a timely manner is loaded as 0.544 on the factor 2. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 5.427 and 12.335 per cent respectively. Third factor is 'Cost', which consists of three variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.835. Drug cost was high have the highest load of 0.869, Accommodation cost was high is loaded as 0.854 and Doctor's consultation fee was high is loaded as 0.733 on the factor 3. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 3.335 and 7.579 per cent respectively. Fourth factor is 'Process & Conditions', which consists of four variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.574. Doctor appropriately discussed your previous condition has the highest load of 0.867, Hospital premises were neat clean is loaded as 0.821, a higher price had to be paid to obtain better nursing service is loaded as 0.661, Hospitals had adequate number of nurses is loaded as 0.615 on the factor 4. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 2.421 and 5.502 per cent respectively. Fifth factor is 'caring', which consists of three variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.591. travel cost was high has the highest load of 0.807, doctor listened to you attentively is loaded as 0.726, your recommend the services of this hospital to your friends/relatives is loaded as 0.589 and nurses attended to you sincerely when needed is loaded as 0.536 on the factor 5. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 2.269 and 5.517 per cent respectively. Sixth factor is 'Maintenance', which consists of two variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.547. Patient records were will maintenance has the highest load of 0.761 and cabin/ward, beds and floors were clean is loaded as 0.547 on the factor 6. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 2.251 and 5.116 per cent respectively. Seventh factor is 'Additional fees', which consists of two variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.538. To receive good service required payment of extra payment has the highest load of 0.730 and Lab test fee was high is loaded as 0.507 on the factor 7. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 1.996 and 4.536 per cent respectively. Eighth factor is 'Staff sincerity', which consists of three variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.535. Toilets and bathrooms were clean has the highest load of 0.856, patient release procedure was properly followed is loaded as 0.637 and nurses attended to you sincerely when needed is loaded as 0.536 on the factor 8. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 1.880 and 4.273 per cent respectively 9th factor is 'Appearance', which consists of two variables with the reliability co-efficient of 0.532. To receive good service required payment of extra payment nurses were clean in appearances the highest load of 0.654 and health care centers had modern equipment is loaded as 0.653 on the factor 9. The Eigen value and the per cent of variation are 1.759 and 3.999 per cent respectively. Hence the researchers have reduced the number of variables from 44 to 9 underlying factors which can be used for further analysis.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

1. Doctor's Services:

From the above analysis it is inferred that doctor services are the major motivational factor that influence the health care services of the private hospital patients. Hence the hospitals have to provide well experienced doctors, kind approach, deep explain, quick relief for the patients to get the various benefits.

2. General & Other Services

General and other services are another motivational factor that influences the patients to reputation and choosing of their favorite hospitals. Hence health care service providers give general and other services about toilet, fans, restroom, parking etc.

3. Cost

As the result of the analysis Cost and needs play a significant role on the patient satisfaction. Most of the patient demand reasonable cost of health care services and cost have a tendency to reputation so as to the patients needs effectively.

4. Process & Conditions

The result indicates process and conditions are another important motivational factor influences the patient's health care services satisfaction. So the hospital have to personalized services like admission process, terms and conditions, time to visit the relatives and friends, payment mode of the hospital charges and other

health care service. Hence the confidence has to be instilled in the needs of the patients at the point of sale.

5. Caring

The result indicates caring of the patient is another motivational factor influences the patients to caring their health problems and their inner feelings. The hospital have goodwill and fulfill its promises about the all kinds of caring.

6. Maintenance

Maintenance is another motivational factor that influences the patients to maintain the records, deep and clean of wards and rooms, and other maintenance. Hence hospitals should give satisfy with good maintenance activities at any time.

7. Additional fees

As the result of the analysis additional fees play a significant role on the patient's satisfaction. Most of the patients demand low range of lab fee, medicine cost, canteen expenses, nurse and staff and price and have a tendency to coming so as to the patients needs effectively.

8. Staff Sincerity

From the above analysis it is inferred that Staff Sincerity are the major motivational factor that influence the health care services of the private hospital. Hence the hospital staffs have to serve sincere, responds the patients and visitors, flexible, patient complaint handling for the patients to get the various service.

9. Appearance

As the result of analysis appearance play a significant role of the patient satisfaction. Most of patients are expect nurses are clean in appearance, modern equipment and labs room location there are create good name of the hospitals and their health care services.

CONCLUSION

The results are showing that Service quality dimensions and patient satisfaction are depending upon each other. Patients and relatives expect good behavior of doctors and medical staff, good physical facilities, cleanliness, knowledge of doctors to answer patient's queries. Researchers observed and analyzed the opinions of respondents during the survey conducted at hospital. Finally the authors strongly directing that in order to improve the quality of the hospital services and enhance patient satisfaction ; doctors and, administers should build organizational wide consensus on what attributes patients deem to be most important .This can be accomplished through listening to the experiences and expectations of the patients and concentrating on improving service quality dimensions.

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