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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF THE HEALTHCARE SERVICES OF AHMEDABAD AND ANAND REGION

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ABSTRACT:

A customer, in the case of healthcare is the patient, is the most important person since healthcare are dependent on them for their survival. It is the patients who do indirect marketing. Most patients choose healthcare on the basis of Word of mouth communication and recommendation of other patients. Patient satisfaction is an integral part and a key to a successful Healthcare organization. And also health organizations face significant challenges in customer (patients) behavior that see quality as the fundamental criterion to differentiate services provided by them. Numerous studies indicate that satisfied patients want to received better treatment and recover faster. This leads the goodwill for the organization as well as positive effect of word of mouth communication. When patients are satisfied it also indicates that the staffs are performing well their jobs. Hence by keeping the patients satisfied, a healthcare can ensure its success. Therefore surveys on regular feedback of patient satisfaction, their perception and expectation should be done.



KEYWORDS: Patient satisfactions, Healthcare services, Perception, Expectation.

INTRODUCTION:

Good health is the basic need of any individual, and it is said prevention is better than cure. Most of us rarely like to go to hospital but the era has come where we are needed to visit the healthcare atleast to get the assurance about the health condition to have some diagnosis. Services are deeds, processes and performances (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Broadly, services include all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction is generally

consumed at the time it is produced and provides added value in forms (convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser (Quinn, Baruch and Paquette, 1987). The Service sector consists of different dimensions and among them we have picked 'healthcare' which deals with different services such as, treatment, consultancies and some other emerging fields. The paper aims to tackle the issue of service provided by healthcare, access to expectations and satisfaction held by patients, to

identify the relevant service quality dimensions used by patients to evaluate service quality and to determine the existence of significant difference in service quality expectation and satisfaction of patients. It has measured the patient expectation and satisfaction level. Increasing competition in this sector has led the hospitals to realizing the need to focus on increase the service quality to maintain competitive position. Consumers are the determinants of service quality and perception carried by them plays an important role in choosing a

healthcare. This paper presents satisfaction level of consumers (patients) studied in Ahmedabad and Anand region.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Customer satisfaction is getting the highest priority for health services. The patient satisfaction survey is becoming the primary tool of assessing this aspect of healthcare. This survey provides a 'snapshots of patients' opinions of healthcare practice. A healthcare organization purpose is to measure, analyze, and to report the degree to which they are meeting this goal within their organization. One of the primary concerns in Indian health care sector is the centralization of issues of patient satisfaction. Today individuals are having different options when deciding on a specific healthcare provider due to increasing number of service providers and varying options of quality of services provided by them. Two specific and essential elements that influence the selection process for a healthcare service provider are the health care organisation reputation for its commitment to quality and the patient centered service. The world is passing through a phase of rapid transition from fragmented market system to a global one. During business in such an environment calls for a high degree of perfection which enables the enterprises to successfully cope up with challenges. Services are being highly competitive and the healthcare industry in India is moving very rapidly to face this situation. Quality assurance has become the major concern in the delivery of healthcare. Quality of the product or service is an important parameter of a service organization to evaluate its performance and is equally done for the healthcare which is accountable to country as well as to the provider of the resources. The concept of health restoration, rehabilitation, and belief of pain, prevention of disease or death is not tangible or qualify able in numerical or financial terms. Hence in the hospital resources provided in the form of facilities and standard practices forms important indices for measuring the quality of services rendered. The meeting of patient expectations is assumed to play a vital role in the process by which an outcome can be said to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Expectations are an important influence on the patient's overall measurement of satisfaction with a healthcare experience. Patient satisfaction is influenced by the degree to which care fulfils expectation (Mahon, 1996). Some literature however suggests that a link between satisfaction and fulfillment of patient/client expectations is not necessarily the case, since it is possible that the patient's evaluation of a service may be largely independent of actual care received (Williams, 1994). Important factors influencing patients/clients satisfaction include literacy levels, intellectual and physical/sensory disability levels and difficulties with language proficiency or ethnic and cultural diversity. Social elements within our society must be considered as they can very often dictate whether the consumer will provide feedback and express their satisfaction or otherwise, e.g., financial status, educational status, demographics (urban/rural), technology. Previous measurements of patient satisfaction overwhelmingly show that the majority of consumer usually 80% or more, expresses overall satisfaction with their care, with few respondents responding negatively to any given item. Satisfaction is, however, a relative measure which research literature shows, may be influenced by many factors that should be considered. Reflecting the prior discussions and necessities, the key research questions addressed in this study are: How the major dimensions of service quality analysis work in healthcare sector? Is there any major significant gaps observed between patients' perception and expectation related to service quality of health care industry? In this context, the broad purpose of this research study is to investigate the satisfaction of service quality in healthcare sector in the mindset of patients.

REVIEW OF THE STUDY

The customer is "an individual or an institution that is a prospective buyer of a product or service" and "buys the product or the service frequently a systematically".

(Patton, Bleuel, 2000) Satisfaction implies complete fulfillment of one's needs. Every organization and everyone in the organization must strive to satisfy the current customer and create new customers. The most commonly used representation of customer satisfaction is referred to as the disconfirmation model.

(Oliver, 1980) The extent of satisfaction that a customer has with a service encounter is determined by the disconfirmation between the customer's expectations of performance and the actual perceived performance of the service. "A service is an activity or a series of activities, which takes place in interactions with a contact person or a physical machine and provides consumer satisfaction".

(Aloaslan, 1995) Products are tangible, whereas services are intangible. Thus, products are produced by machines and services by people. As a result, services tend to be more variable in quality, while products are more standardized. Another difference between products and services is that unused services cannot be stored. An airline cannot store empty seats, whereas an auto manufacturer can keep unsold cars in inventory. Compared to products, the perishability of services creates more risks for services marketers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the patient satisfaction in healthcare sector.
2. To know the employee's efficiency for patients in healthcare services.
3. To derive conclusions and suggest measures for improving their patient satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference between the customer satisfactions of the healthcare.

SAMPLE SIZE

The researcher collected 100 respondent's data from Ahmedabad and Anand region.

SAMPLE METHOD

Convenient sampling method was using to collect the primary data through structured questionnaires.

PATIENT SATISFACTION LEVEL OF AHMEDABAD AND ANAND REGION

Table - 1

No.	Region	Sample	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
1	Ahmedabad	50	42	08
2	Anand	50	38	12

The above table - 1 shows the satisfaction level of patient in Ahmedabad and Anand region. The researcher filled up total 50 questionnaires each from Ahmedabad and Anand. Out of 50, 42 respondents were satisfied and 08 were not satisfied with the service of Ahmedabad healthcare. On other hand Out of 50, 38 respondents were satisfied and 12 were not satisfied with the service of Anand healthcare. So it indicates that Ahmedabad was good for their services. Basically Ahmedabad healthcare organizations have the latest technology and equipment comparing to Anand healthcare. Ahmedabad is known as Medical Hub.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the customer satisfactions of healthcare sector.

T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Ahmedabad	Anand
Mean	33.33333333	33.33333333
Variance	497.3333333	377.3333333
Observations	3	3
Pearson Correlation	0.991078918	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	2	
t Stat	0	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.5	
t Critical one-tail	2.91998558	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1	
t Critical two-tail	4.30265273	

The above table shows the P-value of customer satisfaction. At 5% significance level, P-value is $1.00 > 0.05$. Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted. It can be said that there is no significant difference between the customer satisfactions of Ahmedabad and Anand region.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research work has been undertaken with the following limitations.

1. The study is restricted to Ahmedabad and Anand only.
2. The sample size is limited.
3. The outcome of the study is based on the views of the respondents on the services provided by the healthcare. As the study is behavior oriented, it is based on the expressions of the patients and such opinion may be arbitrary.

FINDINGS

This study shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 63% are male as against 37% female respondents.

1. The study shows that 80% are married.
2. 64.80% respondents are below 40 years, 25.80% respondents are in the age group 41-60 and remaining 9.40% respondents are above 60 years.
3. The study shows that majority of the respondents going to private hospitals possess professional degrees, Out of the 50 respondents, 44% are working in private sector, 13% are self employed, 23% are professionals, 17% are working in government office and 3% are agriculturists. 50% of the respondent live in city, 24.2% live in urban and 25.8% live in semi urban.
4. 57.7% respondents have health insurance cover and 42.3% have not covered.
5. Out of 50, 42 respondents were satisfied and 08 were not satisfied with the service of Ahmedabad region. On other hand Out of 50, 38 respondents were satisfied and 12 were not satisfied with the service of Anand region. So it indicates that Ahmedabad was provided better services and facilities of treatment.
6. As per t- test, at 5% significance level, P-value is $1.00 > 0.05$. Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted. It can be said that there is no significant difference between the customer satisfactions of Ahmedabad and Anand.

CONCLUSION

Private sector takes responsibility to care and do the essential service in healthcare as much as possible. But this is not simple since many factors have to contribute for its success and also support needed from government and the public. Besides, service quality has become an important corporate

strategy for healthcare organizations. The private sector plays an important role in the healthcare delivery system of India. Through a wide network of healthcare facilities, this sector satisfied the needs of both rural and urban population and has been expanding widely to meet the increasing demands of the customers. Utilization pattern show that the healthcare seekers depend highly on private sector than public sector. Overtime, the private sector has grown significantly. The major area of concern is the quality of healthcare delivered by the private healthcare. The private sector has become the dominant sector with part of the people seeking indoor service and other part of the people taking ambulatory care, i.e. out-patient service. The first and foremost task of healthcare is to deliver quality services to patients and also to improve the quality of services where the situation seems to be critical. The improvement in the quality of medical services to be made available to users is the need of the hour. The hospital services need both qualitative and quantitative improvements, particularly in developing countries. This improvement in the medical services can be achieved through scientific inventions and innovations. Now the entire process of treatment has been changed by sophisticated equipment and technologies. The quality of services is decided by the facilities available in the healthcare. The world raising population and increasing standard of living has led to significant growth within a global healthcare sector. The consumers of healthcare service namely patients also have started to demand better healthcare services facility to support their life. The increase in the longevity of life and also leading a healthy life are the important dimensions of human development.

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