

Vol 6 Issue 12 Sept 2017

ISSN No : 2249-894X

*Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal*

*Review Of
Research Journal*

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“A STUDY ON PATIENTS’ SATISFACTION REGARDING MARKETING MIX STRATEGY OF HOSPITALS AT SANGLI, MIRAJ AND KUPWAD CORPORATION AREA.

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ABSTRACT :

A service is the action of doing something for someone. It means the services are an action of organization that maintains, improves the well-being and working of people. The services are activities, benefits or satisfaction which are offered for sale and are provided in connection with sale of goods. It is largely intangible (i.e. not material).

KEYWORDS : Patients’ Satisfaction , action of organization , service marketing .



INTRODUCTION

The service marketing mix is also known as an extended marketing mix and is an integral part of a service blueprint design. The service marketing mix consists of 7 P’s as compared to the 4 P’s of a product marketing mix. Simply said, the service marketing mix assumes the service as a product itself. However it adds 3 more P’s which are required for optimum service delivery.

In the services marketing, the providers are supposed to influence and satisfy the users. When people buy services offered by a service provider in a true sense, they buy the time, knowledge, skill or resources. Marketing the service is meant marketing something intangible. It is like marketing a promise. The applications of marketing principles in the services sector are the main things in the services marketing. It is the managerial process of managing the service.

The marketing elements, known as marketing mix such as product, place, price and promotion successfully combine to prove the concept of rightness, that is, right product, right place, right price and right promotion. A successfully applied mix strategy serves the benefit of target market. For service industries three extra elements have been added to the marketing mix: who gives the service (people), how the service is given (process) and the environment in which the service is given (physical evidence).

Healthcare services have changed tremendously. In olden days, the doctors were very few and were available at distant places or only in government hospitals, they could afford to choose their patients and how to treat them. Patients treated them like gods. But now with rapid increase in private clinics, nursing homes and private hospitals, they can not afford to treat them with arrogance. With increase in competition, the role of healthcare marketing has increased.

Therefore, the present study analyses the benefits of this framework to hospitals and try to find out how the patients reacts on marketing mix strategy implemented in hospitals. At the same time, it also tries to examine the weaknesses identified be converted into opportunities and strengths. Because these services help to improve the hospital services and changes the structure of marketing strategy.

2. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

Due to ever increasing competitive relations and change ability in the market, any organization should be adjustable and seek to the practical approach in discovering the circumstances that can influence its success. The marketing mix strategy of any hospital should be, to present their services to the customers (patients and their relatives) in such a way to give maximum satisfaction to them and respond to challenges in a manner that exceeds its competitors. Customer orientation should be the joint value of all employees. Therefore, the importance of the present study can be summed up as under.

1. Helpful to create impact by way of applying effective marketing strategy in such a way that the prospects come to know about the quality to be offered to them as hospital patients.
2. It is helpful for the hospitals to maintain proper standard to face the passion of competition by implementing best marketing mix.
3. It is supportive to fill a gap between the quality promised and the quality-offered.
4. It can be seen that whether hospital authorities prove to be high-performers, personally committed, professionally sound, value-oriented, they can satisfy their patients and their relatives.

After studying existing marketing mix, it helps to reframe effective marketing mix.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Dr. Darshana R. Dave and Reena Dave has made research study titled as ' A study on Service quality and customer satisfaction of selected Private hospitals of Vadodara City' published in Pacific Business Review International Volume 6, Issue 11, May 2014. The research study has been conducted to find effect of service quality on patients' satisfaction and customer loyalty in private hospitals of Vadodara City. The data collection instrument used for research work was structured, closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire also contained questions to measure service quality in private hospitals. The main findings of the study indicated that people gives more preference to doctors' qualification and experience. It was also found that status of hospitals, location of the hospital and facilities available in any hospital plays an influencing factor while selecting any hospital for treatment. There was significant influence of education and income of the respondents on patients' loyalty. The suggestions of the present study set as the Health care service providers should make available correct information from time to time as new quality information leads to patient knowledge and satisfaction. The hospitals should have proper operating hours and staff should give individual attention to patients. The study discovered that to improve patient satisfaction, healthcare service providers must focus on quality improvement strategies.

4. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

In order to have better understanding of the marketing strategy in terms of the application of 7P's in Hospitals, one should naturally have the facts and figures pertaining to the impact of the services on the customers visiting to the hospitals for various reasons.

The present investigations work essentially highlights with the help of data collected and information obtained about the total services provided and their benefits to the customers. In more precise terms, the following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the conceptual framework of marketing mix strategy.
2. To know the consumer satisfaction (patients) regarding the medical services extended in the study area.
3. To suggest, if any, for improving the quality of services for increasing level of customers' expectations.

5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- The more expected quality facilities, services and treatment provided by the hospital, greater the level of patients' satisfaction after taking admission in any hospital.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

For this study, the researcher followed descriptive research. For the study, the methodology used for

data collection is as under:

A. Research Title:

"A Study on Patients' Satisfaction regarding Marketing Mix Strategy of Hospitals at Sangli, Miraj and Kupwad Corporation Area.

B. Data collection:

a) Primary data:

The present study is mainly based on primary data which can be collected by two ways i.e. telephone interview and with the help of structured questionnaire. Under this study, structured questionnaire is used for collecting the primary data.

b) Secondary data:

Even though, present study is based on primary data, the reliance on secondary data is also necessary. The secondary data means the data which is available in printed form or available in soft copy. For this study, the secondary data is collected through the following sources: like (1) Reference Books, (2) Magazines, Journals, (3) Office Records, (4) Newspapers, (5) Internet, (6) Brochures, Pamphlets, etc.

C. Sampling:

For the present study, the researcher has taken 200 respondents as sample. The respondents are the patients of the hospitals in study area.

D. Statistical Techniques used:

Statistical techniques like weighted average, Chi-square test, computer analysis, etc. are used for analysis.

7: DATA PRESENTATION:

Sr. No.	Responses	1 Strongly dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Can't Say	4 Satisfied	5 Strongly satisfied	Total
1	Care taken by the nursing staff of the hospital.	5.5%	13%	8.5%	21.5%	51.5%	100%
2	Behaviour of the staff	3.5%	4.5%	3%	17.5%	71.5%	100%
3	The process of treatment is very lengthy and time consuming.	15%	5.5%	11.5%	8%	60%	100%
4	Facilities provided by the hospital.	10.5%	10%	12%	15%	52.5%	100%
5	Compulsion for purchase of medicine from hospital's or particular shop.	35%	15.5%	6.5%	14%	29%	100%
6	Concession in the bills given by hospital.	29.5%	17.5%	6%	5%	42%	100%
7	Fees of laboratory tests charged by the hospital.	13.5%	3%	2%	33%	48.5%	100%
8	Cleanliness maintained in the hospital.	12%	5.5%	1%	10%	71.5%	100%

9	Provision made for disposing of waste material.	6%	7%	1%	11%	75%	100%
10	Lighting and ventilation facility in the patients' ward.	14%	11.5%	8%	10.5%	56%	100%
11	Drinking water facility	9%	6%	1%	11%	73%	100%
12	Security/ safety provisions made by the hospital.	13.5%	6%	4%	20%	56%	100%
13	The bill settlement process.	8%	8.5%	2.5%	18%	63%	100%
14	The procedure of discharge from the hospital.	4%	1%	9%	13%	73%	100%
15	The system of emergency discharge in this hospital.	6%	3.5%	11%	15.5%	64%	100%

- It shows that the majority of the patients are satisfied with the care taken by the nursing staff of the hospital as well as with the behaviour of them, while the percentage of dissatisfaction is very low.
- More than half of the patients are satisfied with the process of treatment.
- From the above table one could analyze that nearly half of the patients are satisfied with the existing facilities given in the hospital.
- From the above table it is seen that 29% of the patients are strongly satisfied when the hospital makes compulsion for purchase of medicine from hospitals or particular shop. 35% of them are strongly dissatisfied with the same.
- It also shows that nearly half of the patients are of the opinion that they are getting concession in the bills as well as they are satisfied with the fees charged for providing services and laboratory fees.
- From the above table one could analyze that majority of the patients say that the proper cleanliness is maintained in the hospital. They are happy and satisfied with the provision made by the hospitals regarding disposal of the waste material,
- From the above table one could analyze that nearly half of the patients are satisfied with the lighting and ventilation facility in the patients' ward. It can also be analyzed from the above table that majority of the patients are satisfied with the drinking water facility provided in the hospital. More than 50% of the patients feel that proper security/safety provisions are made by the hospital.
- It also seen that majority of the patients are satisfied with the bill settlement process, procedure of discharge from the hospital and the system of emergency discharge in this hospital.

8. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS:

A hypothesis is a useful tool to form a tentative answer to a problem or question at the outset of a project, which helps guide the direction of the research and analysis to solve the problem. It provides a basis for taking ideas or theories that someone initially develops about the economy or investing or markets, and then deciding whether these ideas are true or false.

We often have occasions to make comparison between two characteristics of something to see if they are linked or related to each other. One way to do this is to work out what we would expect to find if there was no relationship between them (the usual null hypothesis) and what we actually observe. The test we use to measure the difference between what is observed and what is expected according to an assumed hypothesis is called the Chi-square test. When using the Chi-square (χ^2) distribution to establish if a relationship exists between two categorical variables, the null hypothesis (H_0) statement does not contain population symbols. Rather, we make

a written statement.

To test the hypothesis of the present study that is:

- The more expected quality facilities, services and treatment provided by the hospital, greater the level of patients' satisfaction after taking admission in any hospital.

Here, the Null Hypothesis (Ho):

Ho: The expected quality facilities, services and treatment provided in the hospital (A) are independent of the level of patients' satisfaction (B).

H₁: The expected quality facilities, services and treatment provided in the hospital (A) are not independent of the level of patients' satisfaction (B).

'A' – Various services provided by the hospital authority.

'B' – The satisfaction level of patients.

We have the following contingency table:

A \ B	Strongly Dissatisfied (B ₁)	Dissatisfied (B ₂)	Can't Say (B ₃)	Satisfied (B ₄)	Strongly satisfied (B ₅)	Total
(A ₁)	11	26	17	43	103	200
(A ₂)	07	09	06	35	143	200
(A ₃)	30	11	23	16	120	200
(A ₄)	21	20	24	30	105	200
(A ₅)	70	31	13	28	58	200
(A ₆)	59	35	12	10	84	200
(A ₇)	27	06	04	66	97	200
(A ₈)	24	11	02	20	143	200
(A ₉)	12	14	02	22	150	200
(A ₁₀)	28	23	16	21	112	200
(A ₁₁)	18	12	02	22	146	200
(A ₁₂)	27	12	08	40	113	200
(A ₁₃)	16	17	05	36	126	200
(A ₁₄)	08	02	18	26	146	200
(A ₁₅)	12	07	22	31	128	200
Total	370	236	174	446	1774	3000

Where,

A₁ - Care taken by the nursing staff of the hospital.

A₂ -Behaviour of the staff

A₃ -Process of treatment

A₄ -Facilities provided by the hospital.

A₅ -Compulsion for purchase of medicine from hospital's or particular shop.

A₆ -Concession in the bills given by hospital

A₇ -Fees of laboratory tests charged by the hospital.

A₈ -Cleanliness maintained in the hospital.

A₉ -Provision made for disposing of waste material.

A₁₀ -Lighting and ventilation facility in the patients' ward.

A₁₁ -Drinking water facility

A₁₂ -Security/ safety provisions made by the hospital.

A₁₃ -The bill settlement process.

A₁₄ -The procedure of discharge from the hospital.

A₁₅- The system of emergency discharge in this hospital.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_j^s \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} \quad \text{which follows } \chi^2_{(r-1)(s-1),0.05}$$

Here, r=5 and s=15

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^5 \sum_j^{15} \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} \quad \text{which follows}$$

$$\chi^2 = 508.88, \quad ,P - \text{value} = 2.2 * 10^{-16}$$

Since P-value < 0.05 we reject the Null hypothesis.

We reject Ho at 5% level of significance and conclude that the different types of services provided by the hospital are not independent of the customer satisfaction.

The patients think about the facilities, services provided in the particular hospital and the treatment given in any hospital are the criteria for getting satisfied after taking treatment from the hospital staff. The above study shows that when they get expected quality facilities, services and treatment they get more satisfied.

9: OBSERVATIONS:

The measures for improving the restaurant have been suggested both in individual functional areas and also collectively for the whole business. With this purpose, the following suggestions are being put forward by the researcher.

It is evaluated that nearly half of the patients are satisfied with the facilities given in the hospital.

1. It shows that the majority of the patients are satisfied with the care taken by the nursing staff of the hospital as well as with the behaviour of them, while the percentage of dissatisfaction is very low. It shows that a good number of the patients are satisfied with the treatment given by the nursing staff.
2. It is a matter-of-fact that, nearly half of the patients are of the opinion that they are getting concession in the bills as well as they are satisfied with the fees charged for providing services and laboratory fees.
3. It is seen that there is very little difference regarding making compulsion for purchase of medicine from hospital's or particular shop. It shows that there is mix response related to span of waiting period while more than half of the patients are satisfied with the process of treatment.
4. From the study, one could analyze that majority of the patients say that the proper cleanliness is maintained in the hospital. They are happy and satisfied with the provision made by the hospitals regarding disposal of the waste material, satisfied with the interior decoration of the hospital.
5. It is observed that nearly half of the patients are satisfied with the lighting and ventilation facility in the patients' ward. It can be analyzed that majority of the patients are satisfied with the drinking water facility provided in the hospital. Majority of the patients feel that proper security/safety provisions are made by the hospital.

10. SUGGESTIONS:

1. The hospitals should make available the counseling department to overcome the problem of high expectations of patients, which may perhaps try to convince the pricing strategy.
2. Hospitals should provide better services to the economically upper class patients, who are ready to spend money on comfort and luxury.
3. Hospitals should provide a system to overcome grievances by using suggestion boxes for the patients who are

facing some problems like charges, behaviour of staff, cleanliness, discharge process, waiting period, etc.

4. As the environment of study area is encouraging for opening large hospitals with multi facility services, the affordable services are available in this area; and at the same time, the most of the hospitals have potential for increasing and opening extra services under their own premises. Hence, the hospitals should try to make available such services under one unit only.

5. At the same time, the location is favorable to medicinal treatment. Hospitals should try to develop their promotional strategies to inform the overall facilities available to patients, which in turn will be helpful for attracting the patients from different parts of the country, as well as from the foreign country for treatment. Thus, this area will become a place for medical tourism.

6. There should be some modification in the hospital to attract the patients. It can be done through improvement in hospitality, appropriate presentation of services and more punctuality and sincerity of doctors.

7. At the same time, the hospitals should try to find out the way to take advantage of the booming medical tourism industry by investing largely in acquiring equipments, size and skills.

8. The hospitals should also try to acquire international accreditation, integrate traditional and clinical treatments and offer end-to-end value added services by tying up with tour operators, airline carriers and hotel companies to provide for brighter prospects for the industry. They should also allow foreign patients to pay through credit and ensure proper support services to foreign patients after they return to their native countries.

11. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

1. The relation between hospital employee presentation and patients' satisfaction.
2. Adapting marketing tasks helps for selecting the location for new hospital.
3. Study of service value management in healthcare sector.

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