

A STUDY ON PATIENT'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY OF PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN TIRUCHANDUR TALUK, THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Services are economic activities that create value and provide benefits for customers at specific times and places as a result of bringing about a desired change in or on behalf of the recipient of the service. Health care services have a distinct position among other services due to highly involving and risky nature of services and the general lack of expertise possessed by consumers. Indian Healthcare sector is second fastest growing sector of Indian economy next only to Information technology. The patients' satisfaction is an integral part of hospital management across the world. It has been accepted that the effectiveness of healthcare depends on the patients' satisfaction with the services provided by the hospitals.

INTRODUCTION

Health is more important for human beings to survive and happiness is nothing more than good health. When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless and intelligence cannot be applied. Healthy citizens are the greatest asset of a country. The formation of human capital is influenced by the availability of Medicare and healthcare facilities. The hospitals bear the responsibility of protecting and serving the human resources which is considered to be the precious resource of a country.

Healthcare sector is a segment within the economic system that provides goods and services to treat patients with curative, preventive, rehabilitative and palliative care. It is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world. "The 'World Health Organization' estimates that there are 9.2 million physicians, 19.4 million Nurses and midwives, 1.9 million dentists and other dentistry personnel, 2.6 Million pharmacists and other pharmaceutical personnel, and over 1.3 million community health workers worldwide, making the health care

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industry one of the largest segments of the workforce.” To maintain and improve the quality of health care services, besides relying on clinical and economic criteria, administrators should utilize the feedback through patient perception of care surveys. As hospitals and other health care providers begin to implement better and sophisticated patient’s surveys, will understand the strengths and weaknesses of their organizations from the patients’ point of view. A better understanding of how consumers evaluate the quality of health care will help administrators and service providers, in determining and improving weaker aspects of their health care delivery system. With continuous monitoring of patient’s perceptions and improvements based on patient feedback, quality of care and patient satisfaction will improve. Therefore, the consumers of healthcare services have exceptionally higher expectations and demand a high level of accuracy, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. In short, they demand overall better healthcare services than in the past. They are also becoming more critical of the quality of healthcare services they are provided with.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Nowadays, as people need to live without any illness, quality healthcare is crucial to any health care system in the world. Many researchers have suggested that the quality health care service is ability to meet the patients requirement’ all characteristics of the service related to its ability to satisfy the given needs of its customers. Service quality and patients’ satisfaction are closely related. Service is an attitude formed by a long term overall evaluation of a hospital’s performance. A survey of opinion of patients’ regarding the healthcare service provided by hospitals is one of the main tools to measure the quality of service. The patients’ satisfaction is an integral part of hospital management across the world. It has been accepted that the effectiveness of healthcare depends on the patients’ satisfaction with the services provided by the hospitals. Supporting this view, many studies have been conducted and concluded that satisfied patients would only follow the advice given by the doctors, follow the information provided by the doctors and would continue using the services provided by the hospitals. Therefore, this study is focused on the examination of patient’s perceptions that significantly influence the overall satisfaction with healthcare organization.

CONCEPT OF SERVICE QUALITY

Service is a virtual feature; it can only be experienced, remembered or forgotten but can never be touched or seen. Various kinds and categories of services offered by service providers cannot be seen & touched, as they are intangible activities.

“A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything.”

- By **Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To understand the socio- economic background of the patients in private hospitals.
- ii. To assess the factors determining the choices of hospital.
- iii. To study the patients attitude towards service quality of hospitals.
- iv. To identify the problems that is being faced by the patients.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is confined to the service quality dimensions of private hospitals located in Tiruchendur taluk. In Tiruchendur, there are good numbers of private hospitals in both urban and rural areas providing advance methods of treatment to the people. Only the hospitals run by the private people have been included in this study. Further, the study is confined to factors that influence the patients' to select a particular hospital and the patients' attitudes towards healthcare services and the problems faced by the patients in availing healthcare services.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is an empirical research based on survey method. Primary data were collected directly from the patients of private hospitals in the study area by using interview schedule. The collected data were coded, tabulated and analyzed with the help of different statistical tools and various inferences have been drawn.

SAMPLING METHOD

Out of the 25 private hospitals in tiruchendur taluk, 8 hospitals have been selected at stratified random method i.e. 2 hospitals from the four categories namely Gynoecologic, paediatric, orthopaedic and general medicine. From these 8 hospitals, 10 sample respondents were selected at convenience method from every hospital (5 inpatients and 5 out patients). Thus, the total sample size amounts to 80.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study is confined to only the private hospitals in Tiruchendur taluk.
- ❖ The reliability of the study depends on the trustworthiness of the respondents which is lacking to some extent.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S. No	Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	35	44
2.	Female	45	56
Total		80	100
S. No	Age	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 20 years	5	6
2.	21 to 30 years	12	15
3.	31 to 40 years	10	13
4.	41 to 50 years	18	22
5	51 to 60 years	15	19

6	Above 60 years	20	25
Total		80	100

Frequency visited in a particular hospital**Table 2****FREQUENCY VISITED IN A PARTICULAR HOSPITAL**

S. No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Less than 3 times	35	44
2.	4 – 6 times	25	31
3.	Above 7 times	20	25
Total		80	100

Table 3**Factors influencing the patients to select a particular hospital**

S.NO.	FACTORS	Highly Important (5)	Important(4)	Moderate (3)	Not Important(2)	Nat at all Important (1)	X=	RANK
1	Doctors of the hospital are qualified.	150	100	15	30	5	3.7	IV
2	Doctors are experienced.	75	120	30	40	15	3.5	VII
3	Reputation of the hospital.	125	80	60	10	10	3.6	V
4	The hospital has facilities. (Equipment, infrastructure etc.)	190	120	0	24	0	4.2	II
5	The hospital is recommendation by others.	200	60	51	26	5	4.3	I
6	The doctors give proper guidance and diagnosis.	150	160	30	0	0	4.3	I
7	The hospital has good ambience.	125	80	51	20	8	3.6	V
8	The hospital gives extra facilities like canteen, pharmacy store and phone is easily available.	100	100	24	30	12	3.3	VIII
9	The hospital is located in nearby area.	150	112	0	24	10	3.7	IV
10	The hospital has excellent trauma/ emergency services.	145	80	33	24	10	3.7	IV
11	The hospital is recommended by other doctors.	200	80	0	30	5	3.9	VI
12	The hospital provides facilities to	75	140	60	20	0	3.5	VII

	patients like rooms, stretchers, wheelchair and food.							
13	The doctors of the hospital give accurate and true information every time.	100	68	15	30	13	2.8	IX
14	The hospital gives one click access facilities (laboratory for tests are available in hospital) is being provided by the hospital.	100	120	30	20	10	3.5	VII
15	The hospital gives food and accommodation to the patients' relative.	185	84	36	10	5	4	III
16	The hospital is neat and tidy.	225	60	24	24	0	4.2	II
17	The hospital offers easy payment system.	150	80	36	20	8	3.7	IV

Table 4

Attitude towards various aspects of service quality in hospitals

S.NO	ATTITUDE	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	DA(2)	SDA(1)	$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$	RANK
1	Doctor's with patients treatment to illness is good	100	20	0	40	10	3.37	III
2	Medical and non-medical staff's relationship with patient's is good	125	60	30	40	10	3.31	IV
3	Doctors communication is good	200	80	0	20	10	3.87	II
4	Nurse rapport with patients is good	50	100	60	50	0	3.25	IX
5	Quick process in diagnosis section	75	80	15	40	20	2.87	VIII
6	Less waiting & consulting time	125	60	30	40	10	3.31	V
7	Quick process in paying bill	50	72	9	60	19	2.62	X
8	New technologies are adopted in the hospital	150	40	0	50	15	3.18	VI
9	Reasonable fees is charged by the hospital	100	40	24	50	17	2.88	VII
10	The hospital is located in convenient place	175	80	36	16	5	3.9	I

FINDINGS

- ❖ It is found that, Majority 45(56%) respondents are female.
- ❖ It is observed that majority 25% of the respondents are above 60 years of age.
- ❖ It is clear that factors namely the hospital is recommendation by others, the doctors gave proper guidance and diagnosis took first rank and these are the important influencing factors to select the private hospitals.
- ❖ It is clear that the hospital is located in convenient place is an important attitude towards the service offered by the private hospitals.
- ❖ It is found that inadequate space in patient rooms, Lack of infrastructural facilities, Lack of cleanliness of the hospital and Advance payment and High cost of treatment/exorbitant fees charged are the important problems faced by the patient in the private hospitals while availing health care services.

CONCLUSION

Good health is an essential pre-requisite which contributes significantly both to the improvement in labour productivity and human resource development. In the present day, private hospitals have become highly competitive in marketing their services to the public. The study also indicates that sample respondents have positive attitude towards various aspects of healthcare services provided by the private hospitals. Therefore, it is concluded that providing quality health care service at an affordable cost has become not only the need of the hour but also the order of the day.

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