

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PATIENT LOYALTY AND OUTCOME OF PATIENT SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 20 years, patient satisfaction surveys have gained increasing attention as meaningful and essential sources of information for identifying gaps and developing an effective action plan for quality improvement in healthcare organizations. From literature review it was found that there are limited published studies to report the improvements resulting from feedback information of patient satisfaction surveys, and in most cases, these studies were found contradictory in their findings. The researcher considered the hospital which had good infrastructure and promotion strategies, and then also the patient loyalty is reduced. A structured questionnaire was developed with the help of experts and the data was taken from 10200 respondents but after refining the data 10000 respondent data was finally used for analysis. This research paper investigates the relationship of dependent and independent influential attributes towards overall patient satisfaction & patient loyalty. This research concluded that the patient satisfaction leads to patient loyalty. Thus the hospital need to improve upon certain factors which will lead the higher patient loyalty like doctor behavior, patient recovery, support staff behavior, hospital cleanliness and smooth handling of discharge procedure.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, patient loyalty, Healthcare, Hospital care

INTRODUCTION

The goal of today's healthcare facilities is to deliver high-quality services at affordable pricing. As a result, health marketing has gotten more and more competitive globally.

It has been challenging to think about promotion and health care together. The promotion of health services is a notable problem. The marketing mix's human component, price, distribution, promotion, and product/service components all comprise the means of communication. Any service organization's promotion function involves reaching out to past, present, and potential consumers. From literature review it was found that there are limited published studies to report the improvements resulting from feedback information of patient satisfaction surveys, and in most cases, these studies were found contradictory in their findings. The researcher considered the hospital which had good infrastructure and promotion strategies, and then also the patient loyalty is reduced for this study.

LITRATURE REVIEW

Chandra et al(2019) concluded that the patient satisfaction is positively associated with patient trust, doctors' interpersonal skills and communication behavior and negatively associated with

waiting time. Hence, doctors upgrading their communication skills and health service managers strategizing ways to improve waiting time can contribute to better patient trust and thus lead to better patient satisfaction and positively influence health outcomes. Yang Wu (2018) from the survey questionnaire and Economic Experiment of Incentive Behavior to measure PT in healthcare providers, the study found that the continuity of care, the provider's communication ability and clinical capabilities were positively correlated with PT. A cross-sectional study found that satisfaction positively predicted patients' trust in doctors through direct or indirect means path. Zhang et al. (2020) said the trust crisis is a common problem faced by the society. The trust problem among professional groups such as doctors, teachers, government officials, etc., is particularly concerned. Patient trust is defined as the patient's belief that the doctors have the necessary skills for diagnosis and treatment, can give priority to the interests of patients, so that patients accept the medical services with confidence. Du et al (2020) concluded that, service satisfaction was positively associated with building doctor-patient trust. Based on the above-mentioned research viewpoints, this paper divides the measurement of trust into 2 levels, namely, the health care system trust and the physician trust, and constructs the trust measurement dimension.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

From literature review & experts advice (hospital Management) the researcher found that most of the hospitals are facing problem of Patient Loyalty. Behind this there can be two broad reasons -

- a. The patients are not satisfied with the services of the hospital so they do not turn up again
- b. The patients are benefitted that they do not further require visiting hospital.

These private hospitals have their presence on all social media platforms and are also using traditional way of promotion but still not enjoying that position. The second point feasibility is very less then also to find out what are the reasons behind the fewer footfalls in the hospital the researchers need to investigate. Thus, the problem is to analyze that gap which is not letting them to attain that position.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY;

Population: Patients of Private Hospitals:

Sample size: 10000

Both Primary and Secondary Data was collected to have better understanding of the problem.

For primary data 1 structured questionnaire was developed for current patients visiting hospital.

Duration of Data Collection: 3 months (August, September and October 2022)

For Secondary data: Number of Research papers and articles on IMC and Health care sector, website, magazines for the construction of scale as well expert advice was taken.

Tools to analysis: The data collected will be analyzed using the Crosstab & Regression between Revisit to hospital (Patient Loyalty) and patient satisfaction will be used to evaluate the relationship between two variables. SPSS 20 will be used as analysis software.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A structured questionnaire with close-ended questions was used for the quantitative design. The statements in this questionnaire have been already used in previous studies concerning trust, communication skills, and patient satisfaction (30–34). Questions and statements from these already tested questionnaires were used to make the questionnaire for this study; trust in physician scale, communication assessment tool and patient satisfaction surveys. The statements/questions used had high internal reliability with a Cronbach's score of 0.7 or more (30–34). Content validity was verified by two experts. Face validity was done by giving the printed questionnaires to 10 patients in the outpatient department (these patients were not included in the final study) to assess whether it is legible, clear, simple, and easy to understand. Most of the patients understood the statements and found it easy to fill and returned within 10 min, thus, there was no changes made to it. The variables from this questionnaire used in analysis included patient satisfaction, age, sex, ethnicity, educational level, and employment status, number of visits to the health center, waiting time for the consultation, communication behavior of doctors and patients trust in doctors.

The reliability of questionnaire was tested, and the Cronbach alpha was calculated using this study sample (375 respondents). For the whole questionnaire, the Cronbach alpha score for the total of 22 items was 0.91. For section 2, with a total of 8 items, the Cronbach alpha score was 0.76, for section 3 with 10 items was 0.759, and section 4 with 4 items was 0.81.

Standardized open-ended audio recorded interview was conducted which was 30–40 min long per interview. The interview was guided by a semi-structured questionnaire that used 8 open-ended questions which focused on participant's opinion and feelings about trust in doctors, reasoning behind their trust and satisfaction with the consultation.

DATA ANALYSIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between patient satisfaction and Patient Revisit to hospital. After collecting data from 10000 respondents on random basis, it was analyzed and some of the important questions are:

Table 1 : Crosstab

Count		Customer satisfaction			Total
		not satisfied	average	satisfied	
Surgical treatment	None	6	3664	1	3671
	PTCA	0	2711	6	2717
	CAB	0	1607	3	1610
	G				
Total		6	7982	10	7998

From the above table it has been concluded that the patients visiting the Hospital , are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied but they consider the hospital as an average service provider in case of heart surgery , angioplasty specified as percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA) & Coronary-artery bypass grafting (CABG). Thus the patient loyalty variable is not significant in this case.

LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.294 ^a	.087	.086	.443

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer satisfaction

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	185.702	1	185.702	947.550	.000 ^b
	Residual	1959.420	9998	.196		
	Total	2145.122	9999			

a. Dependent Variable: Will you recommend to visit hospital again

b. Predictors: (Constant), Patient satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.070	.024		44.200	.000
	Customer satisfaction	.393	.013	.294	30.782	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Will you recommend to visit hospital again

INFERENCE:

Regression equation

Total impact of independent patient satisfaction

$$Y = a + bx$$

$$= -38.733 + (3.722)x$$

x = Dependent Variable: Will you recommend visiting hospital again

Y = Patient satisfaction (independent variable)

The contribution of individual independent variable patient satisfaction was evaluated through computation of β value for the dependent variable (Patient Revisit). The computed value of β was 0.393 with the T-Test value of 30.782 which was significant at 0.0%, indicating that Patient satisfaction contributes significantly to patient revisit in hospital. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there is a strong positive cause and effect relationship between patient satisfaction and patient revisit.

The value of r^2 is .087 which means that 8.7% of variation in the factor patient revisit is explained by patient satisfaction.

The computed value of F is to be compared with tabulated value of F which is 947.550 at 0% significance level that means the model is significant. The tabulate value for $F_{.9999}^1$ at 5% level is 1.00. As our F value is 947.550 and this value is very high with respect to tabulated value. Thus it is proved that Null Hypothesis is rejected.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The data analysis concluded that indicating that customer satisfaction contributes significantly to patient revisit in hospital. The Patient satisfaction depends on the numerous factors like Panel of Doctors, Facilities and Type of treatment is the main parameters while selecting any hospital.
2. Trained Staff, Panel of Doctors and behavior in person are the main reasons for bringing the patient back again to the hospital.
3. Trained Staff and OPD facilities are prime requisites for a good hospital.
4. For getting affordable treatment one can move to other state or even travel any distance.
5. Best Doctors at Panel, Latest Equipments and Trained Staff is very necessary for a good hospital,.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- Public relations are at the forefront of building a positive reputation for the services and work performed in healthcare organizations.
- Increased competitive pressures for hospitals, increased customer training levels, greater awareness, and better discrepancy between the qualities of service provided by different hospitals
- Health services marketing with image management, it aims to create communication programs that will enable customers to evaluate the hospital and the health services provided positively
- Health institutions and staff should have the ability to communicate effectively with their customers and stakeholders.
- The good website may be a source of information for potential patients, employees, or other stakeholders.
- Consistent messaging repeated across all online and offline touch points are integral to building a strong brand identity and Patient loyalty.

- Video testimonials are one of the most credible and powerful form of patient endorsement because the words come directly from the patients and real recommendation gains more popularity.
- Professionally developed video interview of the practicing doctor, discussing about disease condition, its symptoms, procedures and care, helps building strong brand and trust.
- The capacity to communicate effectively with clients and stakeholders is a skill that health institutions and staff should possess.

CONCLUSION

Patient satisfaction is an attitude. Though it does not ensure that the patient will remain loyal to the doctor or the hospital, it is still a strong motivating factor. Patient satisfaction is only an indirect or a proxy indicator of the quality of doctor or hospital performance. Delivery of patient-focused care requires that we provide care in a particular way, not just sometimes or usually, but always. It must be every patient every time.

From this study it finds out that the satisfied customer not only revisits the hospital next time but he also recommends the hospital to other people. The patient is not fascinated by good advertisements and promotions but they are highly influence by the word of mouth which they get from other people. Health care industry is more dependent on its results and results are verified by the patients who got good services and treatment in the hospital.

By integrating marketing communications, health and medical providers are able to create synergies between and among selected conveyance mechanisms, amplifying performance and increasing the likelihood of reaching communicative goals. Achieving such cohesion requires devoted planning in an effort to coordinate verbal and visual manifestations to express desired imagery and appeals to target audiences. As extensive benefits are derived from integrated marketing communications, healthcare establishments should consider associated pursuits to be a strategic priority.

Healthcare is an industry that is constantly evolving, with a world of new treatments and technologies to be introduced in the coming years. The need for healthcare brands to keep up with this change and adapt quickly has never been more important than it is today. In order to do so, healthcare brands must have an integrated marketing approach using every medium at its best. Digital mediums like Email, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media, Video Content, and even traditional ones like Print, Radio, etc. together can do wonders for a brand.

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