

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS HOSPITALS A STUDY ON SELECTED HOSPITALS AT SHIVAMOGGA CITY

**G.M. SUDHARSHAN, ANAND M B\*, S.R. NAGARAJA**

Assistant Professor P G Department of Management Studies PES Institute of Technology and Management NH – 206, Sagar Road, Shivamogga – 577 204 Karnataka, India. Email: anand\_vdc@yahoo.co.in

*Received:25 June 2013, Revised and Accepted:28 June 2013*

### ABSTRACT

The opening of Indian economy since 1991 has given a new dimension to the economic structure of the country. The service sector is contributing more than 50% to the GDP. In service sector the contribution of healthcare sector towards GDP is significant. India will spend a huge Rs 200,000 crore on healthcare in the next five years as the country witnessing changes in its demographic profile accompanied with lifestyle diseases and increasing medical expenses. Nearly 80 per cent of the required investment is coming from the private sector. The government spending on healthcare is around 0.9 per cent of the total GDP, which limits the extent and effectiveness of the coverage it can provide. Private healthcare will continue to be the largest component in 2012 and is likely to double to Rs 156,000 crore. Therefore the study focuses on services provided by private hospitals.

**Keywords:** “Age of Consumers”, study the customer expectations, perception, from hospital services

### INTRODUCTION

The modern age can be called as the “Age of Consumers”. In today’s cut-throat competition the consumer is considered as the king. Many policies of various organizations are aimed at keeping the consumer happy and satisfied. It is very important for any organization to keep its consumers satisfied in order to maintain its competitiveness in the market. It is true in case of health care sector also. As the competition grows among the private hospitals, the trend has become customer centric. In last few years, a plethora of hospitals have mushroomed in and around the city. These hospitals are advertising heavily about the specialized treatments provided by them. Because of neck to neck competition between hospitals customers run to these hospitals for specialized treatments. Interestingly all hospitals claim to have a high success rate. They claim to provide the best treatment and other essential facilities at reasonable cost. But how much of this is true and how many of their claims are myth is not known to vast majority of customers.

The current study is focused on examining the various factors prevailed in the private hospitals of study area Viz., customer expectations from hospital services, customer perception from the hospital services and the degree of satisfaction of customers from hospital services.

#### Objectives of the study

- To study the customer expectations from hospital services.
- To study the customer perception from the hospital services.
- To study the degree of satisfaction of customers from hospital services.

#### Limitations of the study

- The time factor acted as a considerable limit on the scope and the extensiveness of the study.
- The information provided by respondents may not be fully accurate due to unavoidable biases.
- The respondents are inpatients of the hospital.

#### Methodology

##### Research design

The present study carried out using both exploratory & descriptive research design with the objective of measuring satisfaction level of patients of five major private hospitals in shivamogga. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire by using Stratified random sampling and secondary data collected were collected.

#### Sampling Plan & Size

We have selected 100 samples for the study as mentioned below;

1.	Nanjappa Hospital	30
2.	Usha Nursing Home	20
3.	Nirmala Hospital	20
4.	Subbaiah Hospital	15
5.	City Hospital	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

#### Research Tools

The research has been conducted by using Structured Questionnaire method for collecting primary data.

#### Sources of Data

Primary data has been collected through personal interview method. Secondary data were also collected by different sources such as newspapers, journals, magazines, reference books & internet.

#### Statistical Tool

Average mean value method used for analysis of data. The outcome of the research is depicted through tables.

#### Analysis & Interpretation

**Table: 1 Expectations of patients from the behavior of doctors**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)
Availability	8.94
Knowledge	8.92
Experience	8.82
Handling of Queries	8.51
Politeness	7.71
Impartial attitude	8.39
Empathy	8.31
Individual Consideration	8.80

<b>Average</b>	<b>8.55</b>
----------------	-------------

**Source: Tabulated Data**

From the table-1 it is clear that the mean scores for the attributes like availability, knowledge of doctors, experience and individual Concern are 8.94, 8.92, 8.82 and 8.80 respectively. This indicating that patients consider these attributes very important. The overall mean score for patient expectations towards the 'Behaviour of Doctors' comes out to be 8.55 against the scale of 9. So the hospitals should have the doctors who fulfill these expectations in an efficient manner.

**Table: 2 Expectations of patients from the behavior of medical assistants**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)
Availability	8.96
Knowledge	8.84
Experience	8.44
Handling of Queries	8.65
Politeness	8.79
Impartial attitude	8.49
Empathy	7.93
Individual Concern	8.21
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.53</b>

**Source: Tabulated Data**

To study the expectations of patients from the behavior of medical assistants, patients were asked to rate their expectations in the scale of 1 to 9 for the various attributes given in the table 2. Mean scores for the attributes such as availability of medical assistants, knowledge, politeness, handling of Queries are very high. It clearly reveals paramedical staff plays an important role along with the doctors in fulfilling the expectations of the patient.

**Table: 3 Expectations of patients from the quality of the administration**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)
Convenient Office Hours	7.63
Check in Procedure	8.85
Fee	7.10
Grievances Handling System	8.85
Billing Procedure	7.68
Check Out Procedure	8.78
Behavior of Clerical Staff	7.79
Behavior of Security Staff	6.45
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.89</b>

**Source: Tabulated Data**

The overall mean score for all the attributes for this factor is 7.89. So it is true to say that patients consider the 'Quality of Administration' is also an important aspect of the hospitals. Expectation level for the attribute check in procedure & grievances handling system are the highest among all the other attributes with the mean score 8.85 each.

**Table: 4 Expectations of patients from the services and facilities provided by the hospitals**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)
Bedding Arrangements	9.0
Proper ventilation	8.63
Cleanliness	9.0
Flies & Mosquitoes	9.0
Outer & Inner Appearance	7.42
Parking	8.31
Well Equipped Units	8.98
Eating Places	8.23
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.57</b>

**Source: Tabulated Data**

The table 4 shows that expectation level of patients for the attributes such as bedding arrangements, cleanliness & flies and mosquitoes are the highest among all the other attributes with mean score of 9 each. Patients also consider well equipped units, proper ventilation, parking facilities as other important. The mean scores are 8.98, 8.63 & 8.31 respectively. Outer & Inner Appearance has got the lowest mean score of 7.42.

**Table: 5 Perceptions of patients from the behavior of doctors:**

Attributes	Perceptions (Mean Value)
Availability	7.21
Knowledge	7.14
Experience	6.62
Handling of Queries	6.75
Politeness	6.42
Impartial attitude	7.82
Empathy	5.76
Individual	6.88
Consideration	
<b>Average</b>	<b>6.82</b>

**Source: Tabulated Data**

To analyze the perceptions of patients from the behavior of doctors, patients were asked to rate their perceptions in the scale of 1 to 9 for the various attributes. The mean rating for each attribute is given in the table. It is observed that impartial attitude has the maximum mean score 7.82, followed by availability and Knowledge of the doctors with a mean scores for these attributes are 7.21 and 7.14 respectively.

**Table: 6 Perceptions of patients from the behavior of medical assistants**

Attributes	Perceptions (Mean Value)
Availability	8.21
Knowledge	5.82
Experience	6.21
Handling of Queries	5.71
Politeness	7.30
Impartial attitude	7.12
Empathy	6.82
Individual	7.71
Consideration	
<b>Average</b>	<b>6.86</b>

**Source: Tabulated Data**

It is clear from the above table that availability has the highest mean score of 8.21 followed by Individual consideration, politeness & impartial attitude. It is a significant factor that the knowledge & handling of queries have the lowest mean score of 5.82 & 5.71 respectively. These are essential qualities of medical assistants in fulfilling the expectations of the patients.

**Table: 7 Perceptions of patients from the quality of the administration**

Attributes	Perceptions (Mean Value)
Convenient Office Hours	5.62
Check in Procedure	6.14
Fee	5.57
Grievances Handling System	5.88
Billing Procedure	7.21
Check Out Procedure	7.63
Behavior of Clerical Staff	6.66
Behaviour of Security Staff	7.98
<b>Average</b>	<b>6.58</b>

**Source: Tabulated Data**

The average mean scores are very low for convenient office hours,

fee & grievances handling System. The administration of the hospitals in the city is good only with regard to behavior of security staff, check out procedure & billing procedure which are not vital attributes when compared to other attributes in meeting the satisfaction level of the customers.

**Table: 8 Perception of patients from the services and facilities provided by the hospitals**

Attributes	Perceptions (Mean Value)
Bedding Arrangements	8.54
Proper ventilation	6.87
Cleanliness	5.64
Flies & Mosquitoes	6.24
Outer & Inner Appearance	5.55
Parking	5.13
Well Equipped Units	7.41
Eating Places	7.05
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.99</b>

Source: Tabulated Data

Mean scores for the bedding arrangements, well equipped units and eating places are higher than the mean scores of other attributes. But the attributes like cleanliness, outer & inner appearance and parking have less mean value. Therefore hospitals should provide these basic facilities which play an important role in keeping the customers satisfied.

**Table: 9 Satisfaction level of patients for the behavior of doctors**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)	Perceptions (Mean Value)	Difference
Availability	8.94	8.21	0.73
Knowledge	8.92	6.14	2.78
Experience	8.82	6.62	2.2
Handling of Queries	8.51	5.75	2.76
Politeness	7.71	6.42	1.29
Impartial attitude	8.39	7.82	0.57
Empathy	8.31	5.76	2.55
Individual Consideration	8.80	6.88	1.92

Source: Tabulated Data

The table 9 shows that difference between the mean values of expectations and perceptions of the patients for the different attributes. The attributes like knowledge, handling of queries & experience have the difference to the tune of 2.78, 2.76 & 2.55 respectively, whereas the difference is lowest in the impartial attitude (0.57).

**Table :10 Satisfaction level of patients from the behavior of medical assistants**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)	Perceptions (Mean Value)	Difference
Availability	8.96	8.21	0.75
Knowledge	8.84	5.82	3.02
Experience	8.44	6.21	2.23
Handling of Queries	8.65	5.71	2.94
Politeness	8.79	7.30	1.49
Impartial attitude	8.49	7.12	1.37
Empathy	7.93	6.82	1.11
Individual Consideration	8.21	7.71	0.5

Source: Tabulated Data

It is clear from the table 10 that difference between the mean values for expectations and perceptions are highest for the attributes such as knowledge (3.02), handling of Queries (2.94) and experience (2.23). The difference is negligible individual consideration is (0.5).

**Table: 11 Satisfaction level of patients for the quality of the administration**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)	Perceptions (Mean Value)	Difference
Convenient Office Hours	7.63	5.62	2.01
Check in Procedure	8.85	6.14	2.71
Fee	7.10	5.57	1.53
Grievances Handling System	8.85	5.88	2.97
Billing Procedure	7.68	7.21	0.47
Check Out Procedure	8.78	7.63	1.15
Behavior of Clerical Staff	7.79	6.66	1.13
Behaviour of Security Staff	6.45	7.98	-1.53

Source: Tabulated Data

We can notice that, the significant difference between the mean value of expectation and perception for the attributes like grievances handling system, check in procedure and convenient office hours with the values of 2.97, 2.71 and 2.01 respectively. It is very interesting that in case of the behavior of security staff the perception value is more than the expectation value.

**Table: 12 Satisfaction level of patients from the services and facilities provided by the hospitals**

Attributes	Expectations (Mean Value)	Perceptions (Mean Value)	Difference
Bedding Arrangements	9.0	8.54	0.46
Proper ventilation	8.63	6.87	1.76
Cleanliness	9.0	5.64	3.36
Flies & Mosquitoes	9.0	6.24	2.76
Outer & Inner Appearance	7.42	5.55	1.87
Parking	8.31	5.13	3.18
Well Equipped Units	8.98	7.41	1.57
Eating Places	8.23	7.05	1.18

Source: Tabulated Data

It is seen in the above table that the largest differences between expectations and perceptions are cleanliness, parking facilities & flies & mosquitoes with the difference of 3.36, 3.18 & 2.76 respectively. The difference between the mean value of expectation and perception is lowest in case of bedding arrangement.

**Major Findings & Conclusions**

- The expectation level of customers in Shivamogga is very high regarding the availability of doctors & medical assistants in private hospitals. The survey reveals that doctors & medical

assistants are available according the expectations of the customers to meet any medical emergency.

- The knowledge, experience and handling of quires among doctors & medical assistants are not up to the expectation of the customers. So it can be concluded that the customers are not satisfied.
- The customers of the opinion that the doctors & medical assistants are impartial attitude & polite in treating the customers. This factor positively influences the psychology of the customers.
- The difference between the expectation & the perception of doctors & medical assistants regarding in the attribute empathy is not big. It shows that the doctors & medical assistants are meeting the expectation of the customers.
- It is observed that the doctors & medical assistants give individual consideration to the problems of patients. It is very important in healthcare services that the individual consideration is necessary has the case history of each is different.
- In health care services along with doctors & medical assistants, admistration also plays an important role in keeping the customers satisfied. According to our survey the customers expressed that they are facing less problems regarding the billing procedure & behavior of security staff.
- The private hospitals are able to meet the expectations of the customers regarding the fee, checkout procedures and behavior of clerical staff to a great extent.
- The difference between expectations & perception of the patient is quite high regarding the grievance handling system, check in procedure & convenience of office hours. The admistration of private hospitals should give due consideration to these aspects.
- The facilities provided by the hospitals are also an important factor in fulfilling the overall satisfaction level of the customers. According to our findings, the customers are not happy regarding the cleanliness, parking facilities & controlling flies & mosquitoes.
- Facilities like proper ventilation, equipments used, eating places & outer & inner appearance are not far behind in meeting the expectation. The difference between the expectations & perception regarding the bedding arrangement is very narrow which shows that the private hospitals are good in providing this facility.

## CONCLUSION

In the present scenario the customers are considered as king. Therefore the customer satisfaction has become the prime concern. Due to the effect of privatization the health care sector is witnessing the growth of private sector. Like other sectors, health sector is also increasingly becoming customer focused. The concept of customer satisfaction has encouraged the adoption of a marketing culture in the health care sector in both developed and developing countries. As large numbers of hospitals are opening up and the people are becoming more aware and conscious of health, great competition has emerged in this industry. So to retain their patients, hospitals have to provide better facilities & services to its customers. Various factors that can affect the patients' satisfaction include behavior of doctors, availability of specialized doctors, behavior of medical assistants, quality of administration, quality of atmosphere, availability of modern facilities etc. So, if the hospitals want to satisfy their customers they have to provide better treatment & facilities. So the present study has rightly focused the satisfaction of customers in the health sector which is consider basic & life saving sector.

## REFERENCE

1. Aurora S and Malhotra M (1997) "Customer satisfaction: A comparative analysis of the satisfaction level of customer of public and private sector banks". Decision24: 109-30.
2. Boulding W, Kalra A, Stalin R and Zeithaml VA (1993) "A dynamic process model of service quality: from expectations to behavioral intentions". Journal of Marketing 30:7- 27.
3. Garbarino E and Johnson M S (1999) "The different roles of satisfaction, trust and commitment in customer relationships". Journal of Marketing 63: 70-87
4. Gustafsson W, Johnson M D and Roos I (2005) "The effects of customer satisfaction, relationship, commitment, customer retention". Journal of Marketing 69: 210-215
5. Vernoer P C (2003) "Understanding the effect of customer relationship management efforts on customer retention and customer share development". Journal of marketing 67: 30-45.
6. Sharma R D and Chahal H (1999) "A study of patient satisfaction in outdoor services of private health care facilities". Vika lp a24: 69-76
7. Sharma R D and Chahal H (2003) "Patient satisfaction in government outpatient services in India". Decision30: 109-28.
8. Zeithamal Valarie A, Mary Jo Bitner, Dwayne D Gremler & Ajay Pandit "Services Marketing" by Mc Graw-Hill Publishing company Limited, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, New Delhi.