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Healthcare services quality, companion's satisfaction, and intention to revisit: A review paper

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Abstract

Health sector is the sector where other are having concern and take care the humans whether they are in the clinics, hospitals, medical facility and others places. Those provide health care services are having highly crucial jobs of undertaking the patients and their health whether they are children, young, old or others. The study is being conducted in the context of Malaysia which was not attempted in the past. The importance of the research is that it will increase the validation to be used in the literature regarding the companion perception and behavioral intention towards the service quality of the hospitals. Researcher is trying to give a brighter side about the companion satisfaction along with the contribution of increasing the value of the organization. Those are aware about the functions of the service quality of hospitals that have the effective impact on the organizational success as a whole. The findings of the study suggested that as the service quality improves it is evident it will increase the patient satisfaction with the services and match with their expectations. The behavioral intentions to revisit should be having the similarity with the perceived expectation then the companion and physician will be able to meet the desired level of patient's satisfaction.

Keywords: Healthcare, services quality, companion's satisfaction, intention to revisit, review paper

Introduction

Health care is the most effective and highly demand area for the humans. Human beings are highly concern over their health issues and try to keep healthy by adopting different features along with his health is the biggest concern for the humans whether they are in the developed or developing countries. Health sector is the sector where other are having concern and take care the humans whether they are in the clinics, hospitals, medical facility and others places. Those provide health care services are having highly crucial jobs of undertaking the patients and their health whether they are children, young, old or others.

The importance of the research is that it will increase the validation to be used in the literature regarding the companion perception and behavioral intention towards the service quality of the hospitals. It is necessary that patient companion satisfaction of hospital that is being shown up in the return of patient satisfaction; as far as the customer contentment is concern towards the society to develop the trust on human treatments. In order to analyze the perspective of the patient competition from the hospital quality services from the hospital and have a great concern over the patient to get satisfied from the hospital service quality.

With the virtue of this research; it will be a ground breaking feature to analyze the factors that are having impact upon the patient companion perception on the behavioral intention. There is likely to undertake the companion satisfaction that impact upon the hospital that are having recognition of the patients that contribute towards the profit generation along with the criticism that are being heard by the health care professionals and their institutions (Kagan, Porat, & Barnoy, 2019) [14]. Researcher is trying to give a brighter side about the companion satisfaction along with the contribution of increasing the value of the organization. Those are aware about the functions of the service quality of hospitals that have the effective impact on the organizational success as a whole.

Healthcare Industry in Malaysia

Ministry of Healthy comes under the Malaysian Government; therefore; there are two different health care systems prevails such as: government has a uniform health and a private health care system as well; as it includes in the developing countries as well.

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It is known that government and private sector hospitals are having highly modern equipment in the Klang Valley of Malaysia. There are number of highly qualified practitioners that are providing health care services in Malaysia. It is a fact that Malaysia government hospital is highly reliable that are providing about 74% of hospital beds in the territory while 68% of medical practitioners are having in the government hospitals and clinics.

The ministry of health given the number in 2013; that in Malaysia there was about 2.1 millions of patients admitted and 19.3 million are the outpatients in the government hospital. It is suggested that about 33.3 million outpatients have got the services from the same medical facility. As far as the private hospitals are concern they are having about 1 million of patients admitted while 3.8 millions of outpatients. Government and private hospital are having high competition in between and focus upon the patient's satisfaction as well. Patients are having different perception about the services but suggest that the relation between the patients and medical practitioners should be increased and grow. It is a fact that medical practitioners are having concern over the patient satisfaction; the reason is that it is a significant subject to undertake from the patients perspective. The responsibility of the hospital is to assess the quality from the patients perspective that who it can be improved by different means (Tran *et al.*, 2019) [30]. The marketers are focusing upon the factors that are having impact upon the service quality due to the intense competition; having large amount of literature and questions from the patients as well.

Hospitals are not in the competition but for the service quality they are having in the competition to improve it and make the customer satisfied (Rahmantya & Djazuli, 2019) [27]. Patients satisfaction level is having different levels some are following their needs and requirement while others are focusing upon the relations with the doctor and patients. It is a fact that medical practitioners are highly focused upon the patient satisfaction rather than profitability. Patient's factors are to be assessed that how they perceive the service quality of the medical services that can be helpful for the improvement as well (Tran *et al.*, 2019) [30]. Medical practitioners are focusing upon the factors that can help them to improve the services of quality.

Service quality

The most prominent feature in the service marketing is the service quality and it is suggested that service quality is the most researched area for the researcher because it is considered as the competitive edge over other factors as well (Eneizan & Wahab, 2016) [33]. In the past there are different phases of service quality but the best form is existence in the current era; there are number of researcher conducted different researches to analyze it and present different assumptions to evaluate the service quality. There are different thoughts of schools that came up with the different assumptions about the service quality; from two of them has discussed the service quality that are North America and Nordic schools. However; both schools did not able to measure the service quality accurately but there are differences between these two schools are existing. As far as the Nordic School is concern they are assessed the service quality in Europe and suggested that it includes two dimensions that are: Physical and Interactive Quality; (Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman, 1985) [34]; however;

other studies suggested there are three dimension namely with the technical dimension; functional and organizational image.

The researcher Gronroos suggested that there is a perception gap existence but it can be reduced through narrowing down; the suggested model includes variety of factors that are having suggestions over the gaps. It is argued that supplier can have the impact upon the flip sides of gaps through the management of customer desires. It is further argued that customer feeling regarding the products is the reflection of the supplier good quality products that constitute upon the marketing services and technical services to increases the level of perception. While on the other hand; North American School suggested that service quality can be analyzed through the certain formula that suggest real efficiency subtracted from the expectations that also considered as the indirect non confirmative analysis (Meesala, & Paul, 2018) [21]. This method suggests that there is a high score indicate the high level of service quality. However; in the USA researcher focuses upon the Servqual scale to measure the service quality. This perception further changes by the researcher Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) [22] through the model of Seminal; in which there are ten quality dimensions exists in the series of different focus groups. It is suggested that customers prefer to have the same parameters to analyze the service quality of different types. The suggested model presents the set of number 1 to 5; where 1 to 4 suggest service is being offered by the different organizations has quality inequality; expected to real service; however; gap 5 reflect the customer expectations with the real services (Gera, 2011; Helkkula, 2011) [6, 9].

The discussion about the two schools of service quality but there are other studies that are being conducted in the last thirty years. Service quality is being considered as the physical quality; interactive and image quality (Iqbal, Hassan, & Habibah, 2018) [10]. The other researcher suggested that good services are being assessed through the analyzing criteria that customers perceive about the quality (Alzoubi *et al.* 2019) [1]. It is also suggested that customer questions are the best way to analyze the services and employees contribute towards the customer satisfaction. Service is an essential part in illustrating the hotel's planning and their execution of strategies to secure the services towards the customers (Liat *et al.* 2017) [18]; it is also suggested that customers are keen to assess the services with their satisfaction level and it should be meet their expectations level to categorized good quality services (Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1988) [23]. Service quality provides the edge to the organization over the competitors in the market and has the long term advantages for them (Prakash, 2019) [24]. It is evident that customer satisfaction and service quality has become the most prominent feature for the organization to compete for a long run in the market.

In the research of Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) [23]; includes the experiment evidence that have the five dimensions of service quality variables. By using the Nordic School on service quality suggested that service quality is the feature of the service marketing. That suggested service quality is a gap between the customer desires and actual service (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985) [22]; and embraces the other scholars to analyze the service quality in the parameters of marketing (Berry *et al.* 1985) [34]. Lately it is being suggested that customer analyzes the service quality into ten factors that are: responsiveness, tangibles, competence,

courtesy, security, access, understanding, communication, credibility and security (Parasuraman, 1988) [23]. Further updating added into the model by clarifying the model construct such as: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility and assurance (Pynnönen, Immonen & Hallikas, 2019) [26]. It is also argued by the other researchers that functional aspect is being considered while the technical aspects are being ignored. The researchers are focused upon the analysis and illustration of service quality and its impact upon the customer satisfaction and purchasing behaviors (Lussier, & Hartmann, (2017) [20]. The previous research results are being matched and found that expectations are the main feature that can illustrate about the service quality. The assumption of Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) [23] in view of the analysis of service quality and bring changes into the service quality according to the desired and expectations of the customers through the SERVPERF to meet the customers satisfaction level and improve the service quality adequately.

The emerging concept given by the Brady and Cronin, (2001) [2] that service quality itself include the multidimensional features and having hierarchical construct that represent the third order factor model. This model was tested by Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz, (1996) [4]; in order to check the reliability of the service quality, outcome, environment, tangible and nine sub dimensions as well. However; large number of other researchers has discussed the service quality management in the depth; such as; the concept stated that service quality did not measured in the numbers and highlight the measures is useful for the industries. Service quality is intangible and not has the numbers or figures to quantify (Dolan *et al.*, 2019) [5]. In the market companies only measure in the service that what can be easily calculated in the numbers but use the qualitative features to analyze it (Johnston and Morris, 1985) [12]. On the similar lines; services for the manufacturing concern can be measured in the numbers through the financial performance including the other aspects that are not quantifiable such as; uniqueness, flexibility and quality of the product to help the companies to become competitive in the market (Kaplan, 1983) [15].

It is suggested that service quality can be measured from the available data that can be available through the internal or external sources of information (Silvestro *et al.* 1990) [28]. The internal data sources are from the organization management and staff that can provide the insight about the service quality. Internal evaluation of the service quality cannot give the required performance of the service quality but it should directly associate with the customer satisfaction as well. The study suggested for the analysis of two model that are Performance model (EP Model) and normative quality model (NQ Model). EP model focus upon the classic ideal point that is based upon the service quality model and NQ model focuses upon the SERVQUAL based upon the customer expectations. The findings of the study highlighted the criteria and validity of the EP model which is considered higher than the existing models and validity of the SERVQUAL and NQ model. The service quality theory was illustrated into five statements: it is argued that there are certain issues and similarities found between the service quality and satisfaction of the customers (Johnston, 1995) [13]. Other argument is the worth of the issues between the expectations and perceived gap in regards with the service quality. Third argument is the development of the service

quality model and its perceived gap which can be reduced by the managers. The fourth argument is the defining and uses the zone of tolerance in the service quality. The last argument is the recognition of service quality dimensions is important.

Companions Satisfaction

Once the customer the find pleasure with the products or services it is denoted as the satisfaction for the customers and for the organization as well. Satisfaction cannot be defined because it is intangible; it is a feeling, gesture or a moment that is being presented by the customer once their need is being fulfilled through the products or services (Kotler and Keller, 2009) [16]. Satisfaction is the positive feature from the customer that how they perceived about the products or services offered by the organization and they feel happy with it. Provide satisfaction to the customer is the difficult job because one product or service cannot give satisfaction to everyone for that is to handle the different expectation in the one product or service.

It is important in the health care to increase the service quality it is effective to consider the quality in the services areas of the health care sector. Satisfactions of the patients are considered the feature for the improvement of health care services. It is necessary to analyze those factors that are contributive towards the satisfaction of patient in the health care (Johansson *et al.* 2002) [11]. Heath care providers perceive the patient satisfaction as a measure of their performance that can undertake the features such as; compliance, suggestion and continuous care towards the patients (Thom *et al.* 2004) [29]. Satisfaction of the patients suggests that the delivered services are matching with the expectation of the patients and they feel happy about it. Satisfaction of the patients is not for one time but also for the future prospect as well (Brennan, 1995) [3]. In the literature researcher did not able to provide the accurate definition about the patient satisfaction the reason is that it includes different factors as well. Every patient is having different factors which satisfied them while other did not get the satisfaction with the same factors. The proposed definition of the satisfaction of patient has been presented by the research that includes the five psychological construct in the health care sector (Linder Pelz, 1982) [19].

- **Occurrence:** the findings of the services and person perspective that has occurred.
- **Value:** the rationale of considered the positive or negative opinion of the services is the value of the customers.
- **Expectation:** every patient has certain perceptions about any product or service and matches its perception when using it that develops the satisfaction if it matches with their cognition.
- **Interpersonal comparisons:** the current service is the matched by the patients with the previous services.
- **Entitlement:** the person's perception on the basis of certain criteria to achieve the desired results. On the basis of the factors patient's analysis gives them satisfaction and its matters for the health care sector (Linder Pelz, 1982) [19].

Companion Behavior Intention to revisit

The behavior intention illustrated as the behavior of the patient is being aroused through the quality services which lead towards the satisfaction (Zeithaml, Berry and

Parasuraman, 1996) [32]. The Malaysia is highly popular due to its medical treatment which includes various features that are discussed as follows:

- Medical services of Malaysia are reasonable along with the best care.
- Health care professional are highly capable of handling the patients need and requirements.
- The infrastructure of the hospitals is best which reduces the long waiting hours for the patient and get the best treatment within no time.
- The sight scene of Malaysia is beautiful which urge the patients to get quick recovery.
- English is a common language and health care staff communicates with the patients in English as well.

In the 1980s; researchers was focused upon the identifying the service quality meaning from the patients perspective and for the strategies are being developed to provide satisfaction (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985) [22]. The Nordic school of service marketing in Europe suggests that there are two to three dimensions exist in the service quality. Physical and interactive quality is being referred by the Lehtinen (1985) [17]; technical, functional and organizational image dimension is considered as the third party dimension (Gronroos, 1984) [8]. The research findings of Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) [23] suggested five service industries findings that there are five dimension in the service quality to undertake it. The Nordic school of service management and Gronroos considered the service quality is a main feature of service marketing. Back in 1985; the concept of service quality is the space between expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985) [22] and influenced the different researchers in the market about the service quality assessment in the context of service marketing (Berry *et al.* 1985) [34]. The findings did not being challenged by the other researchers. The most discussion was made on the gap of service quality model (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985) [22], specifically SERVQUAL is being developed in order to assess the service quality (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988) [23]; the most of the researchers are using the SERVQUAL in order to analyze the validity and use of different perspective about the quality services in general (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Peter *et al.* 1993; Buttle, 1995).

Companion's feedback

As far as the companion feedback form is concern it is highly valuable in order to analyze the patient's satisfaction with the series. The study was conducted by the researchers about the Dementia among the 90 patients at the facility of Alzheimer's disease Research Centre (Zaleta *et al.* 2012). The purpose of the study was to analyze the companions that are having treatment which is in the form of agreement between the medical practitioner and companion compare to physician and patients. The agreement is flexibility base upon the intensity of dementia; while those are having low dementia hold the low agreement; irrespective of having the results of announcing the findings of dementia analysis; it is found the there are some areas to ponder upon among the patients and companion do not undertake during the consultation about the disease. In the literature there are few studies are available on the patients and companion of dementia once they are being informed. In the study; patients that are aware about the dementia were asked

doctor communicated about the issue or dementia problem to the patient. In the selected sample about 64% reported memory issues; while 26% informed that they are being told about the memory issues or having dementia. Another discrepancy noted between patients and companion in undertaking the dementia; 37% have the agreement with the patients and companion; while 47% patients are being clearly told about the dementia disease; but 37% patients claimed that they were not told about the Dementia problem by the physician.

Linking Hospital Service Quality, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions to revisit

There are number of studies that have analyzed the relations between the satisfaction of patients; service quality and behavior intentions globally; but there are no research was undertaken by the research to analyze the mentioned relation in the context of Malaysia. It is suggested by the research that service quality and satisfaction is directly associated with each other (Smith and Swinehart, 2001). It is also argued that service quality is the main feature that can make the customer satisfied (Newman, Maylor and Chansarkar, 2011). It is suggested that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and empathy are the main feature in the service quality of the hospitals which is known as the HOSPIQUAL (Ahmad Azmi and Norzalita, 2008). It is mentioned in the research that HOSPIQUAL has the impact on the satisfaction of patients in the public health and private health care sector in Kuala Lumpur and Johor, Malaysia. Study was conducted in the context and findings suggested that service quality in the health care sector has the direct impact upon the satisfaction of patients (Badri, Attia and Ustadi, 2009). Another study suggests that satisfaction can be effective in mediation role between the dimension of service quality and customer loyalty. Other studies also confirm these finding such as: Caruana, (2002); Butcher, (2001); Ehigie, (2006) and Lam and Burton, (2006). The other researcher conducted the study in the context of Jordan by using the satisfaction as the mediating factor that is having relation with the care quality and perception of patients (Alrubaeie and Alka'a'ida, 2011).

Conclusion

Service quality is the most significant feature that increases the level of satisfaction among the patients. It ultimately develops the loyalty in getting the services from the same manner and develops an association with the companion and physician. However; there are different studies were conducted on the service quality to assess the factors that impact on the satisfaction level of patients. The findings of the study suggested that patients focuses upon the reliability, empathy and responsiveness of the medical service providers to handle the disease and give them response which they require in the process of recovery increases the level of satisfaction and met the expectations as well. So; it can be concluded that in the patient satisfaction there are two most important factors that should be considered first the service quality and the perceived expectation of the patients; once the expectation of the service quality is being matched then it ultimately give the satisfaction to the patient. This research will be contributive to the literature in the service quality and patient satisfaction in the context of Malaysian Health care sector.

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