A Study on Service Quality In Healthcare System With Special Reference To Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur

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Abstract- *Quality is the major want by a customer or in other words the quality can be said as the measure of customer happiness (from meeting a need or reaching a goal). One of the most important ingredients of successful organizations is customer focused quality management. The patient happiness or satisfaction is influenced by the patient perception of service quality positively in healthcare industry. Unhappy disappointment or dissatisfaction follows when a gap exists between expectations and perceptions of quality attributes and service results. Patients are happy (because of a need that was met or a goal that was reached) only when their expectations are met by the service performance. Awareness is needed by the healthcare providers of how patients perceive the quality of care.*

In this research random sampling way of doing things was adopted to select a sample of patients. To test/evaluate the quality dimensions and the level of happiness (from meeting a need or reaching a goal) of the customers, structured list of questions was used.

Keywords- *Service quality dimensions; Patient happiness or satisfaction; Healthcare quality*

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the fastest growing businesses in recent times is healthcare industry. Many service providers recently have understood that accomplishing customer happiness from meeting a need is a key ingredient towards long term business validity and success. .

Quality as defined by Feigenbaum is a customer determination, based upon the customer's actual experience with the product or service. According to Zeithamal, Parasuraman and Berry, the key to delivering high quality service is to balance customer's expectations and perceptions and close the gap between the two. Patient perception of the quality of service provided is a key factor in determining a health organization's competitive advantage and survival.

A lot of attention is received by service quality by healthcare organizations due to more competition. In case of hospitals related to big business such as corporate hospitals the superior quality is the core of their business success plan. In a competitive world of healthcare it becomes harder to make happy or satisfy a customer. In a situation like this, it is necessary to understand that one of the most important things satisfying a patient in a hospital is its service quality. Happiness or satisfaction of the patient is the true standard for judging service quality. So only the customer can judge the actual quality of the service. Quality is defined as simply the degree to which health service meet their needs, expectations, and standard of care of the patients, their families and other people who receive something valuable of care. The key to delivering high quality service is to balance customer's expectations and perceptions and close the gap between the two.

Parasuraman et al initially identified 10 determinants of service quality dimensions that are used by consumers in assessing service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competency, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, access and understanding.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the quality of service in Meenakshi Hospital
- To identify patients perception about various dimensions of service quality.
- To identify the service quality determinants which contribute in highest terms towards overall satisfaction of patients in Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur.
- To suggest some Measures to Meenakshi Hospital for reducing and eliminating service quality gap.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature. The study was conducted in Meenakshi hospital, Thanjavur a multispecialty 250 bedded hospital. The population consisted of the patients who were admitted to the medical ward in the Hospital. The data was collected as simple random sampling from a sample

of 100 inpatients who were admitted in the hospital for treatment using random sampling technique.

The structured questionnaire was used to collect the data for assessing the quality dimensions and for assessing the satisfaction level. The questionnaire designed for the study consisted of two parts.

Section 1 – Demographic data of patients.
Section 2 – Perceptions of patients about the various dimensions of quality.   .   This questionnaire consists of 7 dimensions of quality – accessibility, reliability, responsiveness, caring, communication and patient outcome.

The data was analyzed by using statistical tools like Simple percentage analysis, Chi square, ANOVA, Regression and Correlation

a.Chi Square

1. Hypothesis

Null hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between Age of the patients and Treatment given to the patients.

Degree of freedom = (R - 1) x (C – 1)
$$= (4\text{-}1)(4\text{-}1) = 9$$
Significance level=0.05
$\chi2_{tabular} = 16.92$
$\chi2_{calculated} = 6.05$
$\chi2_{calculated} < \chi2_{tabular}$

Conclusion:

Calculated value of chi squire is less than the table value, so the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Age of the patients and the treatment given to the patients.

2.Hypothesis

Null hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between gender of the patients and their perception towards overall service.

Degree of freedom = (R - 1) x (C – 1)
$$= (2\text{-}1)(4\text{-}1) = 3$$
Significance level=0.05

$\chi2_{tabular} = 7.815$
$\chi2_{calculated} = 1.78$
$\chi2_{calculated} < \chi2_{tabular}$

Conclusion:

Calculated value of chi squire is less than the table value, so the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between gender of the patients and their perception towards overall service.

3. Hypothesis

Null hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between age and Nursing care .

Degree of freedom = (R - 1) x (C – 1)
$$= (4\text{-}1)(4\text{-}1) = 9$$
Significance level=0.05
$\chi2_{tabular} = 16.92$
$\chi2_{calculated} = 2.94$
$\chi2_{calculated} < \chi2_{tabular}$

Conclusion:

Calculated value of chi squire is less than the table value, so the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Age and the Nursing care.

b. ANOVA

Hypothesis:

Null hypothesis:

 There is a no significant relationship between Income level of the patients and cost of the treatment.

Conclusion:

Calculated F value is 55.125 and F critical value 3.88 so calculated value is more than the table value so Null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant relation between Income level of the patients and cost of the treatment.

c. CORRELATION:

Calculated value is 0.115 and so I concluded that there is no significant correlation between gender and their perception towards overall service.

IV. FINDINGS

Of the respondents 64% were males and 36% were females. 24% of the respondents were in the age group of 20-30 years, 39% were in the age group of 30-40 years, 17% each were in the age group of 40-50 years and 20% of the patients were above 20%. Of the respondents 10% were under the income level of below 10000, 24% between 10000-15000 , 54% of the respondents were under the income level of 20000-25000 and 12% of them were under the income level of above 25000

Regarding the accessibility aspect of service quality, 69% of patients found that the responsiveness at reception was excellent, 54% opined that the hospital had excellent admission process and 50% of respondent's perception towards waiting time to receive service was average.

Regarding tangible aspect of service quality 73% of respondents opined that neat and professional appearance of staffs was excellent, 48% responded that the cleanliness of hospital was excellent, 55% of patients perception towards food service quality was average, 61% of the patients felt that there was good water facility, 51% perception to electricity service was good and 56% responded that the security service was excellent.

On considering reliability aspect 49% of the customers felt that the cost of the treatment for their treatment was average and 49% opined that billing service was also average.

According to responsiveness aspect 64% felt that the responsiveness by laboratory staff members was good and the responsiveness during X-ray and scan was good according to 59% of the patients and 58% responded that pharmacy service was just average.

Regarding nurses the care provided by them was excellent according to 61% of the patients and excellent doctors care by 62% of the respondents.

On according to communication aspect patient's perception on information's provided on insurance service was average according to 49% of the patients 64% felt that the information's on treatment was good.

72% rated that the treatment given was excellent. Considering overall service 56% of customers felt as good and 57% opined that the discharge delivery timing was average.

V. SUGGESTIONS

- Pharmacies in hospital should be equipped with medicines needed to cater the particular requirements and should try to reduce the waiting time of patients to get the medicines, because often patients got left alone without attendants as their attendants have to wait in a long queue for long duration to get medicines from the pharmacy.
- Timely discharge delivery should be followed and maintained.
- Information's on insurance service explained to the patients and attendants can further be explained.
- Organization can keep on tracking needs of these customers to find ways to fulfill them by involving patients and their attendants in decision making.

VI. CONCLUSION

Incorporating consumer expectations of quality is most important by an organization to survive and flourish in today's dynamic environment. For attracting newer patients and retaining existing ones in highly competitive healthcare environment patient's perception of service quality and their satisfaction is essential. The study highlighted that it was possible for patients to evaluate the various dimensions of service quality provided and overall patient outcome. People were highly satisfied with the treatment provided and staffs care in the hospital. The study also brought to focus certain areas which require the attention of management so that steps for improvement could be taken and service quality could be improved.

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