A Study of Patient's Satisfaction towards Ayurvedic Hospitals / Clinics at Valsad District of Gujarat, India

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Abstract: *Introduction:* In India, now it becomes easier to find out the hospitals according to the type of diseases such as cancer, eye, cardiac and diabetes etc. Hospitals can also be classified based on the system of medicine such as Allopathic, Ayurveda, Siddha, Homeopathy and Unani. Each one is trying to build their brand image and unique market segment. *Methods:* This was a hospitals based study. The opinions of patients were collected informally at different Ayurvedic hospitals in Valsad district. The study also carries to the notice of innovative service requirements expected by patients. The data was collected using convenience sampling during 2016 from patients attending the Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics of Valsad district (Gujarat) India. All the responded were above 14 years. The data was collected from 100 patients out of 120 distributed questionnaires. *Results:* The study found that patients are highly satisfied with the Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics in terms of treatment. It is also found that patients are extremely satisfied with regard to user-friendliness system and staff tangibility. The factors which scored very low on satisfaction level are hospital tangibility and doctor oriented services. This might be possible because of the customer expectations from the hospital as well as from the doctors are more due to the traditional system of medicine. *Conclusion:* We can conclude by saying that the patients are highly satisfied from the factors like accessibility and staff tangibility but there are also few factors which were found very low on satisfaction level. Hence, Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics are doing well in the area of treatment but they need to be more focus on some issue which is clearly visible to the patients because patients are the customers.

Keywords: Ayurvedic health care centre, Ayurvedic doctor, hospital tangibility, patient satisfaction, behavior, treatment.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current scenario, the importance of service is rising day by day, therefore, marketers need to be very careful towards marketing of the service products and they necessitate more appropriate approach as marketing of services is a exigent task.

The records indicates that, in 2011-12 service contributes 3,976,498 to Indian economy, in 2012-13 service contributes 4,628,810, in 2013-14 service contributes 5,376,045 i.e. 51.31 percentage and in 2014-15 service contributes 6,118,738 i.e. 52.97 percentage which indicates a growing trail.

In India, now it becomes easier to find out the hospitals according to the type of diseases such as cancer, eye, cardiac and diabetes etc. Hospitals can also be classified based on the system of medicine such as Allopathy, Ayurveda, Siddha, Homeopathy and Unani. Each one is trying to build their brand image and unique market segment. But still question arises that how these hospitals or different medicines can satisfied their customer or patients needs and wants? What are the factors who do really affect their performances?

2. DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is influenced by specific product or service features. A major study reveled reasons why customers switches service providers so, they found that competitor actions to be a relatively minor cause (H Ali 2012). Most customers did not switch from a satisfactory provider to a better provider. Instead, they switch because of perceived problems with their current service provider such as-

- **Core service failure**- billing error and service catastrophes that harm the customers.
- **Service encounter failure**- uncaring, impolite, unresponsive or unknowledgeable.
- **Pricing**- high price, price increase, unfair pricing practices, deceptive pricing.
- **Inconvenience**- inconvenient location, hours of operation, waiting time or appointments.
- **Responses to service failure**- reluctant responses, failure to respond, negative responses.
- **Attraction by competitors**- more personnel, more reliable, higher quality and better value.
- **Ethical problems**- dishonest behavior, intimidating behavior, unsafe and unhealthy practices.

Further, individual factors like customer's mood/emotional state and situational factors such as family member opinions also influence satisfaction.

3. PRODUCT AND SERVICE FEATURES

Customer satisfaction about product or service is depending upon how a customer evaluates the product or service features. For a service like in a hospital, significant features may be comprise cleanliness, availability of doctors, immediate treatment in emergency, availability of rooms, helpful staff, cost etc.

4. CUSTOMER EMOTION

Emotion as strong, relatively uncontrolled feeling that affects behavior. All of us experience a wide range of emotions. Emotions involve subjective feeling and these feeling have a specific component that we label as the emotion, such as bad and happy. In addition, emotions carry an evaluative or a like/ dislike component.

Customer emotion also influences their views of satisfaction with the products or services. For example, mood state of life satisfaction. If you are in a good sate of mood, you response to product or service features positively but in opposite, when you are in a bad mood so your response to the product or service feature will address to the negative feelings or generally you avoid to response.

5. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR SERVICE SUCCESS OR FAILURE

When the customer have been amazed by the results, they be likely to find out the causes, and their evaluation of the causes can influence their satisfaction or dissatisfaction and once the customer is satisfied they tend to expect more from the product or services. There are many factors which influence the customer satisfaction but the actual difference between the expected and actual gives us a clue of losing the opportunity.

Factor influencing customer expectations of service

Customer expectations hold several elements, including desired service, adequate service, predicted services and a zone of tolerance that falls between the desired and adequate service levels. The model shown in Fig 1 shows how expectations for desired service and adequate service are formed.
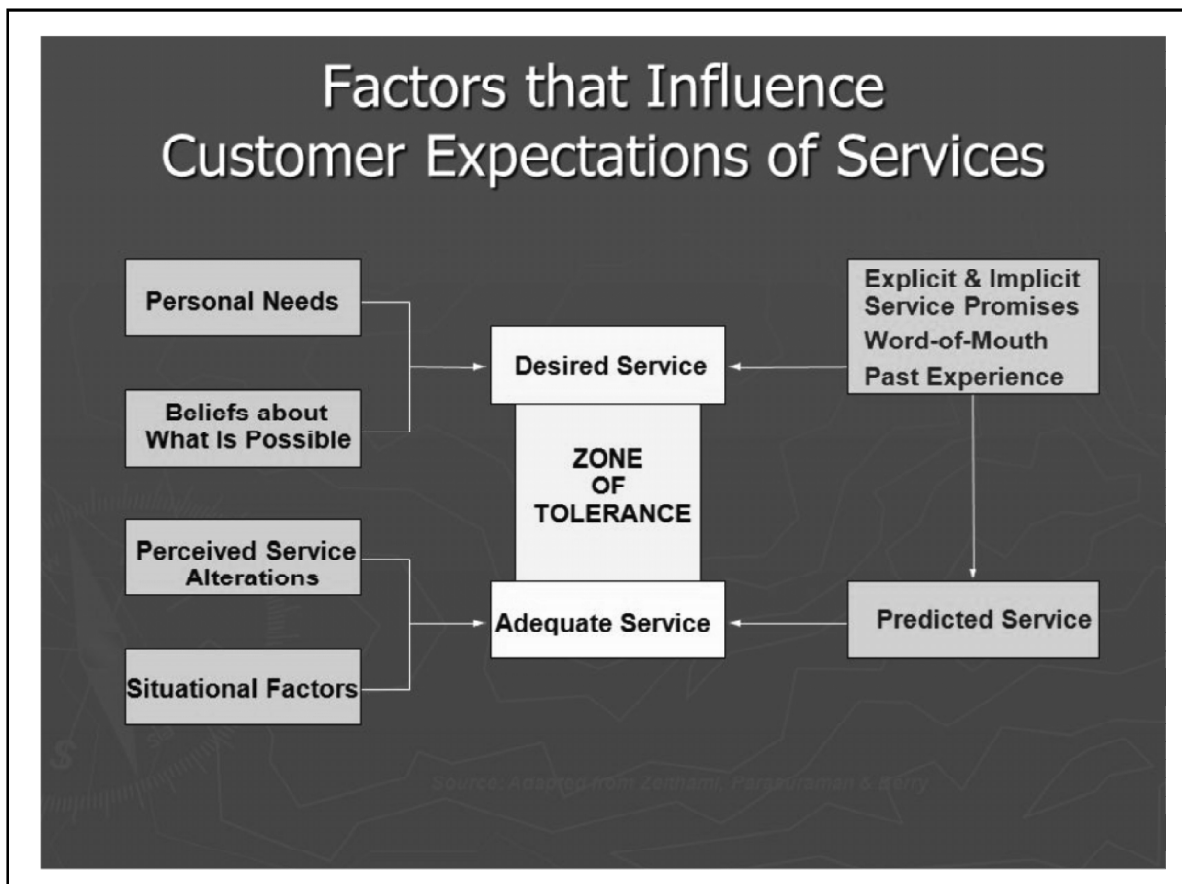
Figure 1: Factors Influence Customer Expectations of Services

Source: Adapted from Valarie A. Zeithaml, Leonard A. Berry, and A. Parasuraman, "the Nature and Determinants of Customer Expectations of Service", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science 21, no. 1 (1993): 1-12

6. PERCEPTION OF EQUITY OR FAIRNESS

Following the principles of relationship marketing, many service providers treat customers differently based on their profitability but customers are very sensitive regarding equity and fairness. They always compare their treatment with other customers and frequently ask a question - have I been treated equally and fair with comparison of other customers in case of price, quality or treatment or amenities?

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1. Secondary Research

Secondary research was used to evaluate the patient's satisfaction regarding the service quality which is offered by Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics. According to previous data the research was conducted only in general health sectors but not in the area of Ayurvedic sector particularly. So, here the gap was found. This study accomplished from different Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics in Valsad district, Gujarat (India) and the duration of this study was about approx three months.

7.2. Quality Research

This study was done in a systematic way. The appointment was taken from different Ayurvedic vaidya (doctor) to discuss the literature/methods and data which can be collected by the existing patients and the way in which the data can be grouped. The discussion supported in grouping the factors under six categories that is doctors service oriented, hospital tangible, staff tangible, accessibility, process and treatment cost.

7.3. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was prepared into two parts. One is introductory part and other one is based on literature review. The questionnaire was also developed into two languages i.e. English & Gujarati (local language). The five point likert scale was used in a structure format and every item was rated as numerical 1 as strongly dissatisfied and numerical 5 as strongly satisfied.

7.4. Sampling and Data Collection

The data was collected from 100 patients from five different Ayurvedic hospitals in Valsad district, Gujarat (India). The responded were chosen on the basis of the data taken from the Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics. All the responded were using the services of Ayurvedic health care centers and hospitals. The investigator collected data by visiting directly to all the Ayurvedic hospitals and interviewing the patients. The sampling method followed by researcher was convenient sampling.

8. ANALYSIS & RESULTS

The satisfaction level of various factors influencing patient satisfaction is presented in Table 1. The overall satisfaction of patients is 74.0, has a positive valence out of 100 responded. That means that the patients are highly satisfied with regards to the hospitals/clinics they visited for the treatment.

Table 1
Mean

Satisfaction

Satisfaction		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	74	74.0	74.0	74.0
	2	26	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The mean and standard deviation of various factors influencing patient satisfaction are presented in Table 2. Patients are highly satisfied in accessibility i.e. 21.63, then comes staff tangibility i.e. 18.39 and process treatment cost i .e. 17.21.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Different Factors

Statistics

		DR_SERVICE_ ORIENTED	ACCESSI- BILITY	HOSPITAL_ TANGIBLE	STAFF_ TANGIBLE	PROCESS_ TREATMENT_ COST
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	14.73	21.63	10.49	18.39	17.21
	Std. Error of Mean	.304	.186	.235	.222	.260
	Median	14.00	22.00	11.00	18.00	18.00
	Std. Deviation	3.038	1.857	2.355	2.215	2.599
	Minimum	10	14	5	14	13
	Maximum	22	25	15	23	22
	Sum	1473	2163	1049	1839	1721

ANOVA test was performed to see if there are any discrepancies in average levels of satisfaction of the patients under various factors. The ANOVA analysis is shown in Table 3. ANOVA disclose that there is a significant difference in the satisfaction level of various factors (p = 0). Hence, HO is accepted in the case of accessibility and H1 is accepted for rest factors.

9. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

We can conclude that the patients are highly satisfied with some factors such as accessibility and staff tangibility but there are also few factors which were found very low on satisfaction level. These are hospital tangibility and doctor oriented services. This prove that the Ayurvedic health care centre need to more focus on up gradation of infrastructure of hospitals/clinics and also some behavioral aspects of their staff. They should also work on doctor's regularity and availability in the hospital/clinics premises, which means 24*7 availability of the doctors/vaidya. In today's world hygiene is the most preferred factor while choosing

Table 3
ANOVA

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DR_SERVICE_ORIENTED	Between Groups	519.958	1	519.958	129.411	.000
	Within Groups	393.752	98	4.018		
	Total	913.710	99			
ACCESSIBILITY	Between Groups	4.810	1	4.810	1.401	.239
	Within Groups	336.500	98	3.434		
	Total	341.310	99			
HOSPITAL_TANGIBLE	Between Groups	136.569	1	136.569	32.452	.000
	Within Groups	412.421	98	4.208		
	Total	548.990	99			
STAFF_TANGIBLE	Between Groups	260.974	1	260.974	113.762	.000
	Within Groups	224.816	98	2.294		
	Total	485.790	99			
PROCESS_TREATMENT _COST	Between Groups	223.258	1	223.258	49.130	.000
	Within Groups	445.332	98	4.544		
	Total	668.590	99			

any hospital/clinic for treatment so these hospitals should also work upon this and if these hospital/clinics can make a hi – tech, well competent infrastructure so It may attract or retain many more patients for the treatment. They should also focus on the cost availed by the patients during treatment because now a day's people compare the cost against the quality. After all patients are the customers therefore, Ayurvedic hospitals/clinics need to be more focus on some issues which are clearly visible to the patients.

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