

MARKETING OF HOSPITAL SERVICES IN RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT

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Abstract

Buddha has said that of all the gains of health are the highest and the best. Health is not only basic to leading a happy life for an individual but it is also necessary for all productive activities in the society. Who would deny that a soldier who is not keeping good health cannot be expected to defend the frontiers of his country even when he is provided with the latest sophisticated weapons?

Service marketing by hospital deserves analysis because of its importance in treating its patients which is a service to the community. Analysis of hospital services special significance since it deals with the life of the patients. An inefficient management of hospital service will be disastrous to the patient and will affect the reputation of the hospital.

The study has the following objectives:

1. To study the origin and growth of the case unit.
2. To examine the services provided by the hospitals to the patients.
3. To study the attitude and satisfaction of the patients and
4. To study the marketing of paramedical services by the hospitals.

Major Findings of the Study

- More than one-third of the patients who have visited the hospital feel that they get best treatment in the hospitals
- All the patients opine that the nurses in the hospital are prompt in discharging their duties.
- According to 92% of the patients the room rent charged in the hospital is reasonable.
- More than 96% the patients opine that they are discharged after the complete cure.
- There is no significant relationship between the sex of the patients and the attitude towards the hospital services
- There is no significant relationship between age of the patients and the attitude towards the hospital services.
- The type of treatment such as paying section or free section) does not influence the level of attitude towards the hospital services.
- The monthly income of the patients influences the level of attitude towards the hospital services.
- The major limitations are:
- This study is confined to Ramanathapuram District only.
- Convenience sampling method used in this study has its own limitations.

Key Words: Attitude of consumer, Satisfaction level, Services, health care, Inpatient, Outpatient, Paramedical, Treatment

Introduction

Good health is pre-requisite to human productivity and all round development of the society. It is essential for economic and technological development. A healthy community is the infrastructure upon which an economically viable society can be built. The progress of society greatly depends on the quality of its people. Unhealthy people can hardly be expected to make any valid contribution towards development programmes. Health is man's greatest possession, for it lays a solid foundation for his happiness. Charaka, the renewed Ayurvedic physician is known to have said, "Health is vital for ethical, artistic, material and spiritual development of man".

Since many health problems require a level of medical treatment and personal care that extends beyond the range of services normally available in the patient's home or in the office of the physicians, modern society has developed formal institutions for patient care intended to help meet the more complex health needs of its members. The hospital, major social institutions for the delivery of the health care in the modern world, offer considerable advantages to both patients and society.

Today a hospital is a place for the treatment of human ills and restoration of health and well being of those temporarily deprived of these. A large number of professionally and technically skilled people apply their knowledge and skill with the help of complicated equipment and appliances to produce quality care for patient.

A hospital provides services to the patients. It renders both health service and medical care services. The main function is to promote the health of the community.

Services are best marketed by the already established needs of the consumer and by performance. If a service is performed well, the business or profession will prosper. Services are defined by the American Marketing Association as "activities, benefits or satisfactions which are offered for sale or are provided in connection with the sale of goods". Services include both tangible and intangible activities.

A service is any activity or benefit that one can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to physical product.

According to the World Book Encyclopedia, "Hospital is an institution for the treatment and care of persons who need medical attention. Hospitals serve as centers for medical research and as schools to train doctors, nurses, technicians and other medical workers. Medical students gain practical experience by working in hospital".

In the American Hospital Association's Classification of Health care Institutions define medical service as the services pertaining to medical care performed to the patients by the physicians, dentists, nurses and other professional and technical personnel.

A hospital being service oriented aims to increase the service level to the patients. Service level in a hospital refers to the amount of medical and paramedical attention given to a patient and the cost at which it is provided.

The service provided by the hospital depends on the type of service for which it was established. Each hospital is distinct in its characteristics and its performance is according to the type of treatment such as general, acute care, long stay and specialised services like heart treatment urology, gynecology and the like.

The hospitals are owned and managed by the State and Central Government, local bodies like Panchayats, Municipalities and CSI Hospitals. They are also owned and run by the private and voluntary organisations and individuals.

Statement of the Problem

Mostly research in marketing covers product only but there are number of institutions that are marketing their services. Service marketing by hospital deserves analysis because of its importance in treating its patients which is a service to the community. Analysis of hospital services special significance since it deals with the life of the patients. An inefficient management of hospital service will be disastrous to the patient and will affect the reputation of the hospital.

Further in treatment, the patient needs efficient treatment to make him fit for operation. Further providing proper post operative care is essential to get full benefit of the operation.

The present study is covering a totally different area and aspect of Hospital services, in the laying stress upon the services rendered by the hospitals in Ramanathapuram region.

Scope of the Study

The study is confined to the services rendered by the hospitals to its patients. This study is undertaken from the point of view of the patients.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives

1. To study the origin and growth of the case unit.
2. To examine the services provided by the hospitals to the patients.
3. To study the attitude and satisfaction of the patients and
4. To study the marketing of paramedical services by the hospitals.

Hypothesis

1. Age of the patients influence the attitude level towards hospital.
2. Sex of the patients influence their level of attitude.

3. Type of treatment influences the level of attitude of the patients
4. Income of the patients influences the level of attitude.

Methodology

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from the various hospitals records. The Primary data were collected through a structured interview schedule.

Collection of Data

To collect the data, stratified sampling has been adopted. Samples have been selected from out patients, in patients, free service patients. Sixty samples have been selected. Convenient sampling has been adopted for the survey of patients.

Tools of Analysis

The attitude of the patients towards the services rendered by the hospital was analysed by using chi-square Test. Attitude level of the patients has been analyzed with regard to the following factors.

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Type of treatment (Out Patient, In Patient)
4. Monthly income

Analysis of Patients Attitude towards Hospital Services

Components of a Patients Attitude towards Hospital

Patients' attitude towards the Hospital was measured with the help of the following six components:

1. Service Charges
2. Treatment
3. Recommending the Hospital for treatment to others
4. Nursing Services
5. Allied services provided and
6. Hospital management

The attitude of the patients towards the Hospital was measured by using a Five point scale. Score were given to each statement as shown below.

Scores for five point scale

Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Statement	5	4	3	2	1

After giving score for each statement, the total scores for each patient was calculated. The overall position of all the 60 patients has been consolidated by categorizing into 3 groups viz., high, medium and low level according to the individual scores.

Arithmetic mean \bar{X} and the standard deviation (σ) score for 60 patients were computed. Those who scored above $\bar{X} + \sigma$ were classified as high level and scores below $\bar{X} - \sigma$ were as low level. Those patients whose score is in between $\bar{X} + \sigma$ and $\bar{X} - \sigma$ were classified as medium level of attitude. Accordingly, patients who have secured scores 28 and above were classified as having high level of attitude and those secured 21 and below were classified as having low level of attitude. Patients who have secured scores between 22 and 27 were classified as having medium level of attitude.

On the basis of the score obtained, the patients were classified into three categories are high, medium and low level. Out of the 60 patients surveyed 16.66 percentage (10 patients) has high level of attitude, 51.66 percentage (31 patients) has medium level of attitude and 31.66 percentage (19 patients) has low level of attitudes.

Attitudes of the patients towards the hospital was analysed with the help of following variables.

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Monthly income
4. Type of treatment.

Chi-square test has been used to find out whether there is any significant difference between the attitude of the patient and the factors influencing the level of patient's attitude.

If the calculated value is greater than the table value at 5% level, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between attitude of the patients and independent variable.

If the calculated value is less than the table at 5% level, it is concluded that the independent variable has no significant influence on the level of attitude of patients.

Factors influencing Patients Attitude towards the Hospital

Sex of the Patients

Ho = Sex of the patients does not influence the level of attitude towards the hospital.

H1 = Sex of the patients influences the attitude towards the hospital.

In order to find out whether there is significance relationship between sex of the patients and the level of attitude towards the hospital, the two way table has been prepared. Table 1 reveals the sex-wise classification and attitude level of the patients.

Table 1: Sex wise classification and attitude level

Sex	Level of Attitude			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
Male	6	24	10	40
Female	4	7	9	20
Total	10	31	19	60

Degrees of freedom : 2
 Calculated Value : 3.5009
 Table value at 5% level : 5.99

Since the calculated value is less than the table value at 5% level, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is concluded that the sex of the patient does not influence the level of attitude towards the hospital.

Age of the Patients

Ho = Age does not influence the level of patients attitude towards the hospital.

H1 = Age influences the level of patients attitude towards the hospital.

In order to test whether there is significant relationship between age and attitude level chi-square test has been applied. A two way table has been prepared for this purpose. Table 2 reveals the age and the attitude level of patients

Table 2: Age and Attitude towards Hospital

Age	Level of Attitude			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
Below 40	2	9	9	20
Above 40	8	22	10	40
Total	10	31	19	60

Degrees of freedom : 2
 Calculated Value : 2.73
 Table value at 5% level : 5.99

Since the calculated value is less than the table value at 5% level, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between age of the patients and attitude towards the hospital services.

Monthly Income of the patients

Ho = There is no significant relationship between patients income and level of attitude towards the hospital services.

H1 = There is significant relationship between patients income and level of attitude towards the hospital services.

In order to test whether there is significant relationship between monthly income of the patients and level of attitude towards the hospital services Chi-square test has been

used. A two way table has been prepared for this purpose. Table 3 shows the monthly income of the patients attitude level of patients.

Table 3: Monthly income and attitude level

Monthly income	Level of Attitude			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
Below Rs. 10000	8	21	16	45
Above Rs. 10001	2	10	3	15
Total	10	31	19	60

Degrees of freedom	:	2
Calculated Value	:	15.16
Table value at 5% level	:	5.99

Since the calculated value is more than the table value at 5% level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that monthly income of the patients influences the level of attitude of the patients towards the hospital services.

Type of Treatment

Type of treatment undergone by the patients has a close relationship with the level of attitude towards the hospital. On the basis of type of treatment, patients have been classified in Table 4.

Table 4: Type of Treatment

Type	No. of Patients	Percentage
Paying Section	50	83.33
Free Section	10	16.66
Total	60	100

From the Table 4 it is clear that 83.33 percent has been treated in paying section and 16.66 percent has been treated in the free section. More than three-fourth of the patients are taking treatment in the paying section.

Ho = Type of treatment such paying or free treatment does not influence the attitude of the patients towards the Hospital.

H1 = Type of treatment influences the attitude of the patients towards the Hospital.

In order to find out whether there is significant relationship between the type of treatment and attitude towards the Hospital chi-square chart test has been applied. A two way table has been prepared for the purpose. Table 5 reveals the type of treatment and attitude level.

Table 5: Type of Treatment and Attitude Level

Type	Level of Attitude			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
Paying Section	9	24	17	50
Free Section	1	7	2	10
Total	10	31	19	60

Degrees of freedom	:	2
Calculated Value	:	1.62
Table value at 5% level	:	5.99

Since the calculated value is less than the table value at 5% level, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is proved that type of treatment of the patients does not influence the level of attitude towards the hospital services.

Major Findings of the Study

- Majority of the patients visiting the hospital are male (66.66%)
- More than two third of the sample patients treated in the hospital are above 40 years of age.
- More than 58% of the sample patents have monthly income less than Rs. 10,000.
- More than one-third of the patients who have visited the hospital feel that they get best treatment in the hospitals
- A vast number if the patients (94%) are satisfied with the fee collected.
- Majority of the patients' opinion that the test charges are reasonable.
- According to the opinion of more than three-fourth if the patients, the hospital have adequate number if qualified doctors for treatment.
- All the patients are of the opinion that the doctors are kind towards them.
- More than three-fourth of the patients are satisfied with the post-operative care in the hospital.
- All the patients are of the opinion that the nurses kind to them.
- All the patients opine that the nurses in the hospital are prompt in discharging their duties.
- Majorities (96%) of the patients are satisfied with the cleanliness in the hospital and consider it as good.
- More than 66% are satisfied with the facilities provided in the rooms and consider them as good
- According to the opinion of more than three-fourth of the in-patients the hospital provides the type of rooms preferred by them.
- All the in-patients surveyed have said that the doctors visit their rooms daily.
- According to 92% of the patients the room rent charged in the hospital is reasonable.
- All the in-patients are of the opinion that their calls for emergency medical assistance are attended to promptly by the duty doctors and nurses
- According to 96% of the in-patients the doctors spent enough time during room visits.

- The majority 96% of the patients opinion is their doubts were clarified.
- More than 96% the patients opine that they are discharged after the complete cure.
- There is no significant relationship between the sex of the patients and the attitude towards the hospital services
- There is no significant relationship between age of the patients and the attitude towards the hospital services.
- The type of treatment (such as paying section or free section) does not influences the level of attitude towards the hospital services.
- The monthly income of the patients influences the level of attitude towards the hospital services.

Conclusion

The Chi-square test has revealed that out of four factors analyzed, a factor namely monthly income of the patients influence the attitude level. Sex, Age and type of treatment of the patients have no influence on the level of attitude towards Hospital services.

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