Patients Demographics and Service Quality Satisfaction in Private Hospitals

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Abstract

This study is devoted to the demographic analysis of the primary data with regard to the patients' overall satisfaction towards service quality of private hospitals in Jodhpur city. Patients' satisfaction is that state of mind when a patient feels that his needs are completely fulfilled. The level of patients' satisfaction with different demographics may be different from each other. So there is a need to do demographic analysis on patients' satisfaction. In this study data was collected from five major private hospitals of Jodhpur city and analysis is carried out for five demographic variables such as patient's gender, age, marital status, education level and monthly income. Results suggest that categories of gender, education and income have significant difference among the patients' satisfaction whereas respondents from different age groups and marital status were similarly satisfied.

Keywords: Demographics, Patient Satisfaction, Service Quality, Private Hospitals

Introduction:

Recently, quality in health care services has generated a lot of interest in this sector. In hospitals, service quality mainly consists of five dimensions such as tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al. 1985). "Service quality has been identified as a major link between customer's satisfaction and loyalty, essential determinants of organizational sustainability and competitive advantage" (Cronin J.J. 2000). Hospital service quality is proportional to patients' satisfaction. Patients' satisfaction is that state of mind when a patient feels that his needs are completely fulfilled. If a patient perceived more service quality, hence more satisfied and vice versa. According to Ford "Patient satisfaction has always been and will continue to be, a basic need for the overall

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success of any sized organization providing health care, regardless of specialty" (Ford 2001).

Hospitals are operating in an extremely competitive environment where patient satisfaction is an important factor to gaining and maintaining market share. All major players in hospital arena use satisfaction information of their customers for making decisions. Service managers always try to find out what are the determining factors of patient's satisfaction on the basis of patients' experiences and perceptions of the service provided to them. The most common reason hospitals survey consumers are to know whether they are satisfied with their care and what improvement in service they are expecting. According to Rahil, "Knowledge about satisfaction with the service can serve not only as a performance indicator but also to identify areas of improvement to provide better care and services for the betterment of the user's health" (Rahil A. 2012).

Demographics and Patients' Satisfaction: Patients' satisfaction can vary among the demographic variables. Many researchers conducted study on patients' demographics and their satisfaction level. Afzal and coworkers identified that "older, less educated patients with lower income bracket were more satisfied with healthcare facilities as compared to younger, highly educated with higher income level"(Afzal M. et al. 2014). According to Kalaja and Myshketa "socio demographic factors serve as main drivers for patient's satisfaction. Gender, age, level of education and income has significant impact on patient's satisfaction in Albania" (Kalaja R. and Myshketa R. 2016). Hajifatahi et al. (Hajifatahi A 2008), revealed that "older patients were more satisfied than middle age and younger clients in hospital environment". In other study Hall & Dornan (Hall J A 1990), identified that "older, less educated and married patients were more satisfied towards health care service quality". Mehrnoosh et al. (Mehrnoosh AZ 2010) and Sadjadian et al. (Sadjadian A 2004) also conducted research on patients socio-economic demographics in which they reported that, "income of the patient did not affect their overall satisfaction with healthcare services".

Research Question

Many previous studies revealed that patients' demographic variables have significant impact on overall satisfaction regarding hospitals service quality. The objective of this study is to find out what is the level of patients' satisfaction among different demographics in private hospitals of Jodhpur? Does the patient overall satisfaction differ between the categories of demographic variables? Here, overall satisfaction means, the gross satisfaction arised due to entire experience of hospital visit considering all five service

quality dimension viz. tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy. The study result will provide feedback to private hospitals management, in order to improve the quality of care rendered to consumers of different social backgrounds and demographics. It will also help to identify areas of patient satisfaction and dissatisfaction across the different demographic variables. In order to solve the above research question, the following collective hypothesis is made by researcher.

Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant difference in patient's overall satisfaction with the service quality of private hospitals across demographic variables.

H_A: There is a significant difference in patient's overall satisfaction with the service quality of private hospitals across demographic variables.

Materials and Methods

In this study primary data collected was from private hospitals of Jodhpur city and analysis is being carried out for five demographic variables such as patient's gender, age, marital status, education level and monthly income. To collect the data survey questionnaire was structured and administered personally by the researcher with the respondents in a face-to-face situation. Respondents were selected based on their readiness to participate in the survey and also based on researcher's judgment. Five major private hospitals namely Medipulse Hospital, Goyal Hospital and Research Centre, Kamla Nagar Hospital, Shri Ram Hospital and Raj Hospital situated at Jodhpur city, have been chosen for the study. Criteria for chosen hospitals were multispecialty treatment provided with a minimum of 100 beds facility. From each of the hospital, nearly fifty outpatients were selected as sample respondents, and the total size of the sample collected was 250. Only those patients were selected for the study who visited Out Patients Department of hospital during working hours whether first time or for follow up consultation. Non probability convenience sampling was used to collect primary data.

To determine whether sample data is normally distributed or not, Shapiro-Wilk test was used. The test result ($p < .001$) shows that the ordinal data collected through likert scale for this study is not normally distributed. So for data analysis non parametric tests such as Mann-Whitney test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to check the significance of results. The test results were also complemented with a difference effect size measure (r). Stepwise step down comparison was also performed to know how much, one group is different from others. A level of 0.05 was established as a priori for determining statistical significance.

Result Interpretation

To evaluate the difference across gender and marital status for patient's overall satisfaction with service quality of private hospitals, Mann Whitney U test was used (table 1). The test revealed *significant differences* between the gender (p= .016, z= -2.419) whereas *insignificant differences* between the marital status (p= .317, z= -1.00). For other three demographic variables such as age, education and income groups, Kruskal Wallis test was used (table 2). This test revealed *significant differences* between groups of education (p= .002, χ^2= 14.582) and income (p< .001, χ^2= 38.648) for patients' overall satisfaction whereas difference between groups of age was insignificant (p = .095, χ^2= 6.368).

Table 1: Patients' Satisfaction across Gender and Marital Status

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	r	Sig. (2 tailed)
Overall Satisfaction	Male	133	117.66	15648.50	-2.419	.152	**.016**
	Female	117	134.41	15726.50			
	Marital Status	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.(2 tailed)	
Overall Satisfaction	Married	191	127.42	24337.50	-1.00	**.317**	
	Unmarried	59	119.28	7037.50			

Source: Primary Data

Table 2: Patients' Satisfaction across Age, Education and Income Group

	Age	N	Mean Rank	Chi- Square	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Overall Satisfaction	Up to 18 Years	26	131.54	6.368	3	**.095**
	19 to 40 Years	134	123.02			
	41 to 60 Years	73	120.83			
	Above 60 years	17	155.85			
	Education	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Overall Satisfaction	Up to 12th	84	131.17	14.582	3	**.002**
	Under Graduate	91	131.28			
	Post Graduate	58	121.91			
	Professional Degree	17	78.79			

	Income	N	Mean Rank	Chi- Square	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Overall Satisfaction	Up to 10000	100	138.13	38.648	3	**.000**
	10001 to 30000	93	134.40			
	31000 to 60000	47	81.22			
	Above 60000	10	124.50			

Source: Primary Data

Table 3: Hypotheses Test Summery

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	Patients' overall satisfaction is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann- Whitney U Test	.016	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	Patients' overall satisfaction is the same across categories of Marital Status.	Independent-Samples Mann- Whitney U Test	.317	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	Patients' overall Satisfaction is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.095	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	Patients' overall Satisfaction is the same across categories of Education.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	Patients' overall Satisfaction is the same across categories of Income.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Source: Primary Data

According to Table 3, for marital status and different categories of age, test significance values are more than 0.05 so we *fail to reject null hypotheses* which are patients' overall satisfaction with service quality of private hospitals is the same across categories of marital status and age. Whereas test significance values for gender, categories of education and income are less than 0.05 so we can *reject null hypotheses* which states that there is no difference in patient's overall satisfaction with service quality of hospitals across gender, education and income groups.

Conclusion and Suggestion

From the test results we can conclude that respondents from all age groups were almost similarly satisfied with service quality of private hospitals. In case of marital status, unmarried and married respondents are also equally satisfied. Whereas patient's overall satisfaction differs across the gender, education and income levels. Female respondents were slightly more satisfied than male. Professional degree holders were less satisfied with service quality of private hospitals comparatively others groups. Hospital administration must develop an advanced appointment system to solve the problems of overcrowded OPDs. Management should try to get accreditation from NABH and NABL for their hospital and diagnostic lab respectively to evoke trust and confidence in professional or highly educated patients. Respondents from the middle income group were also less satisfied compared to lower and higher earning groups. This may be because poorer people have benefit to avail discount or exemption of fee or other charges even in private hospitals and higher income groups by virtue of their paying capacities have access to all the facilities they desire and achieve higher satisfaction. Private hospitals should aim at providing quality services at a reasonable cost. Consultation fees must be economical to all the customers and OPD charges must be valid for the next 15 days from the date of consultation. To meet patient expectations the hospitals need to continuously increase their quality of care and monitor the results on a regular basis.

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