

Original Article

Attitude of Supervisors of Yazd Educational Hospitals towards the Role of Personnel Element on the Market Share of Hospital Services, 2012

Mohammad ZareZadeh M.Sc.¹, Mohammad Reza VafaeiNasab M.D.^{2*}, Nadjme HajianPh.D.³

1. Farrokhi Hospital, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran
2. Deputy of Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran
3. Research Center for Health Services Management, Institute of Future Studies in Health, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Kerman, Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: Personnel's attitudes and their behaviors with the clients significantly affect clients' perception of quality of services and consequently influence their satisfaction. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the supervisor's attitude towards the effect of personal elements (as one of the elements of the service marketing mix) on choosing the hospital by patients and their companions.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional descriptive study conducted in winter of 2012. 35 supervisors (study group) were studied in Yazd educational hospitals of Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences; Shahid Rahnemoun and Afshar. The research data were selected via a researcher-made questionnaire on factors of the marketing mixes that its validity and reliability was confirmed.

Results: The results indicated that supervisor's belief in increasing the market share of a hospital services in public hospitals including: 1-Physical evidence 2- Service or product 3- People or persons 4- Efficiency and quality 5- Process 6- Distribution 7-Promotion or propagation and 8- Price. Therefore, the significance of the personnel role in absorption of a definite patient involves the third element in choosing the hospital by patients.

Conclusion: Based on this study, since the third factors in choosing a hospital are the personnel and persons who provide services, it is confirmed that in service-based organizations like hospitals, the most important elements of quality of services are the personnel activities that has been connected with clients of organization. Moreover, it is regarded as a vital factor in developing effective relationships with clients as well as their absorption in the hospital.

Keywords: Hospitals; Marketing; Personnel, Hospital; Hospitals, Public; Patients

Introduction

One of the essential solutions by which an institution can distinguish itself from other competitors is permanently presenting high quality services for clients. A great number of organizations have detected that presenting qualified services can bring them a strong competitive advantage leading to a higher profit. To reach this important issue, it is necessary to constantly pay attention to the clients' expectations of services and thereby increasing the quality of care^[1].

One of the most important resources in every company is its manpower which is undoubtedly one of the prime bases for development. In fact, manpower involves a collection of persons with endless needs. If these persons' needs are satisfied and get the adequate motivation, they utilize their talents, powers and skills to give services to the related organization. Hence, if the persons do not act well in the companies, the company will deal with so many difficulties in achieving its aims (goals), and performing their tasks and responsibilities^[2].

Marketing has developed since economic issues spread in healthcare industry (medical industry). Marketing in service issues including healthcare organizations classified into service organizations. Although success in marketing enables us to act and contemplate systematically regarding health care and its related services but it is a complicated issue different from productive issues. Moreover, it makes possible for people to express opinions cleverly in regard to health services^[3].

However, service marketing is challenging and often hard. The five service characteristics that a health care marketer should identify involve: lack of tangibility, lack of similarity and variability, inseparability, supply and interaction with clients^[4]. In most presented frames regarding marketing mix, there are four elements including goods, price, promotion and location. Due to the significance of the four new elements including "persons or personnel", "process", "physical evidence" and "efficiency" in service marketing, the issue of "the eight (octoploid) elements of comprehensive service management" was mentioned.

This pattern proposes eight decision variables for managers of service organizations. The effective elements in service marketing including product, location and time, process, efficiency and quality, persons, advanced publicity (propagation) and education, physical evidence, price and other service expenses^[4]. Therefore, it can be stated that humanities resources are the most important business capitals. The most important elements for success of the organization are good and accurate personnel actions and policies. Moreover, a manager's ability to utilize the personnel's physical ability as well as mental energies is regarded as another element. Manpower is one of the key factors in developing the effectiveness of different companies. It can decide how to use the available time, equipment and materials etc. in the company and how to meet the clients' needs^[2].

In high demand services, the clients not only have contact with service personnel but also with other clients. The difference between service occupations lies in the employees' qualifications who present service to the clients. Similarly, the permanent clients' personality in a service institution can help to determine the nature of the service of that institution. Therefore, people are regarded as a part of production in many services. Managing such services specially services between clients and their providers regarding establishing satisfactory experiences is a challenging task. The personnel's behavior is effective in quality of presenting services ^[5]. Moreover, it can affect the clients' satisfaction as well as their behavior such as loyalty. Along with ensuring their purchase continuity, it also changes a client into a good marketer ^[6].

Success in service business depends on the personnel. Clients are absorbed or repelled by the personnel. Therefore, investment in human skills seems to be essential ^[7]. The direct partnership in production of the services means that clients evaluate the employees' appearance quality, their social and technical skills. As clients judge other clients, managers should make their best attempt to direct their behavior as well. To pass the traditional management and preserve the survival of organization, managers need to make deep and essential changes in their management methods. Any change in their attitude towards manpower can result in good consequences for them. Generally, the success of organizations is mostly dependent on their personnels'

attempt ^[8]. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the supervisor's attitude towards the effect of personal elements (as one of the elements of the service marketing mix) on choosing the hospital by the patients and their companions.

Materials and Methods

In this cross-sectional descriptive study a p8 conceptual pattern (model) of the service marketing mix was utilized that consisted of 8 dimensions of product or service, distribution (location and time), process, efficiency and quality, persons, progressive (advanced) publicity (propagation) and education, physical evidence, price and other costs of service ^[7]. Then utilizing library studies, the variables related to each dimension were collected. To gather the research data a researcher-made questionnaire was used.

In devising research instruments, due to lack of resources of service marketing specifically in the healthcare department, by searching more, several books, thesis and magazines were obtained and also a questionnaire was designed by contribution of various professors.

The content validity of the questionnaire was substantiated by some specialists qualitatively and its reliability was confirmed via Cronbaches Alpha. This study was performed on the supervisors of educational hospitals in Yazd in winter of 2012. Since the study group was small in the public hospitals, all of them (n=35) were questioned. After collecting the research data, SPSS were utilized to analyze the data.

Results

The study results showed that the elements supervisors in Shahid Rahnamoun hospital believed to affect increasing market share of hospital services followed as: 1) Physical evidence 2) efficiency and quality 3) service or product 4) process 5) the personnel or persons

6) distribution 7) price 8) promotion or propagation.

Therefore, the significant role of the personnel or persons in absorbing the patients was determined and in their opinion it involved the third factor in choosing the hospital by the patients.

Table1. Supervisors' attitude towards the effect of marketing elements in Yazd educational hospitals

	Afshar Hospital Frequency (percentage)	Shahid Sadoughi Hospital Frequency (percentage)	Shahid Rahnamoun Hospital Frequency (percentage)	Mean Frequency (percentage)
Service or product	83.33	83	76.16	80.83
Price	70	70	59	66.33
Distribution	75.66	76.50	68.33	73.49
Promotion or propagation	74.72	70.36	54	66.36
Persons or personnel	78.16	88	74.33	80.16
Physical evidence	83.71	91	79.71	84.80
Process	73.14	84.28	75	77.47
Efficiency and quality	73.37	86.37	78.62	79.45

Discussion

Since according to the results, the third element in selecting a hospital by clients is the personnel's' presenting the service. Therefore, it is confirmed that in service organizations like hospitals, one of the most important elements of service quality which is effective in maintaining and obtaining new clients as well as surviving the organization involves personals' activity who have relation with clients of an organization. Moreover, it is regarded as a vital element to develop an effective relationship with clients and their

absorption to the hospital. In a similar research conducted by Nasiripour et al ^[9] in Tehran, managers of public and private hospitals in Tehran as well as experts of health assistance of health ministry were questioned and it was determined that price and location (distribution) were effective elements.

Moreover, it was indicated that there are some differences between these two studies: the samples were different; in their research, seven marketing mix was utilized whereas in the present research eight marketing mix was applied.

The order of the effective elements in their research involved price and location, but in the present study, they are 1- physical evidence 2- service and product 3- the personnel or persons.

In a similar research conducted by Yaghoobi et al in regard to external clients' (patients) attitude, the below results were obtained: according to the patients' opinions, the highest score in for patients to choose a hospital was belonged to the personal elements (physician and paramedic) ($4/18 \pm 2/72$) whereas the least score belonged to the location. (Hospital atmosphere) ($1/19 \pm 5/44$). In public hospitals, the price of services was the most important element in choosing the hospital but within private hospitals, the personnel (physician and paramedic) were the most important element ^[11].

Regarding the research conducted by RakhshaniMoghadam, several effective elements were reported respectively as 1- quality, 2- price 3- process 4- product 5- persons 6- physical evidence 7- progressive publicity 8- distribution. Some differences between these two studies deserve attention: the major difference lies in the order of effective elements of price, process and distribution that may be due to the below reasons:

a) The Mashaniz Engineering Service Company did not utilize appropriate canals of distribution to introduce its services b) RakhshaniMoghadam's research conducted in a realm related to engineering service did not include the limitations of medical department (department of health)

c) Since the mentioned company was private so most rules and regulations, prices and processes are determined by the managers. Managers' maneuver for their service marketing in this company was effective in regard to price and process elements.

d) The criteria and conditions governing the presented service in that company determined by the company managers.

e) Regarding the presented services, this company within the studied hospitals invested more in the quality of services. It can be due to that most qualitative variables were kept under the control of managers ^[12].

A research titled the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior(OCB) and enabling the personnel in health center of Tehran medical university aimed to determine the relationship between OCB and each of its four (quadruplet) dimensions in enabling the personnel. The results showed that it had a significant relationship in enabling the personnel and also was useful to develop manpower of health center ^[13].

Also another research conducted by Binstok, Demorail and Smith in 2003 regarding the relationship between OCB and service quality in about 49 most famous fast food restaurants. In this study, it was emphasized that the vital element in a service organization involves the employees especially those who are in direct contact with the clients ^[14]. Javadin et al conducted a research titled internal marketing a step to develop OCB and quality of services in Gas Company in Tehran

in 2008. The purpose of the study was to identify the effect of internal marketing on OCB and the quality of services. The results revealed that internal marketing proceedings in the gas station increased the personnel's OCB and the quality of services compared with the present study results. In the mentioned research the more focus was on the internal marketing and identifying the external actions taken into account, whereas in the present research this issue was investigated with a broad view ^[15].

Goodrich, Muller et al, Kusen and York conducted some studies regarding tourism treatment. Medical tourism and market of medical services should be activated. Goodrich

proposed tourist attraction via proposing the appropriate and qualified health care services ^[16]; Muller et al. proposed a service pack relevant to the physical conditions of the patient, healthy diet, comfortable location for worship and education to attract the patients ^[17]. Kusen regarding patients as the guests who devote part of their time for a specific treatment that after being transferred to their country and having medical tests as well as diagnosing x-ray if required, the patient will receive medical procedures based on their needs ^[18]. York also regarded the treatment via doctors' teleconferences; travel etc. and mentioned that it made an industry which has some benefit for societies ^[19].

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