



**THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY, TRUST AND REPUTATION
ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM PUBLIC
HOSPITALS IN JORDAN**

by

Hamza Ali Mohammad Alshatnawi

1333011020

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DECLARATION OF THESIS

Author's full name : Hamza Ali Mohammad Alshatnawi
Date of birth : 03\02\1985
Title : The Influnce of Service Quality, Trust and Reputation on Customer Satisfaction:Evidence From Public Hospitals in Jordan
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**Pengaruh Kualiti Perkhidmatan, Amanah dan Reputasi Mengenai Kepuasan
Pelanggan: Evidence Dari Hospital Awam di Jordan**

ABSTRAK

Tesis sarjana ini telah mencuba untuk mengakses dan menganalisis kepuasan pelanggan dengan kualiti perkhidmatan (keketaraan, kebolehpercayaan, maklumbalas, jaminan dan empati) kepercayaan dan reputasi di hospital awam di Jordan. Pengkhususan dijuruskan kepada perkara yang akan - menentukan kepuasan dan mengesan kepuasan pelanggan pada masa dan rawatan perubatan dijalankan di semua hospital awam di Jordan. Kajian ini adalah satu kajian keratan rentas yang menggunakan soal selidik berstruktur diri yang ditadbirkan kepada kumpulan sasar pelanggan university yang mana semua pekerjaannya telah dilindungi oleh visit yang kedua-dua hospital awam di Jordan tersebut. (King Abdullah Hospital dan Princess Basma Hospital). Daripada dua ratus empat puluh dua soal selidik yang ditadbir, kesemua 242 soal selidik boleh digunakan dan ianya telah memperolehi 93% untuk dianalisis. Pakej perisian versi 19.0, SPSS menguji analisis deskriptif dan kebolehpercayaan manakala struktur pemodelan persamaan (SEM) digunakan untuk menganalisis struktur masa (AMOS) serta menguji hipotesis dengan menggunakan versi 19.0. Kajian mendapati bahawa sebanyak tiga hipotesis utama dan lima hipotesis sub telah digubal dan hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa semua hipotesis telah disokong. Lebih-lebih lagi, kualiti perkhidmatan, amanah dan reputasi di dapati mempunyai kesan yang besar dan positif ke atas kepuasan pelanggan. Semua implikasi terhadap kajian tersebut serta teori telah dibincangkan dan cadangan untuk kajian seterusnya pada masa akan datang telah dibuat. Semua batasan kajian ini juga telah dinyatakan bersama.

Kata Kunci: Amanah, Kepuasan Pelanggan, Kualiti Perkhidmatan, Reputasi.

The Influence of Service Quality, Trust and Reputation on Customer Satisfaction: Evidence from Public Hospitals in Jordan

ABSTRACT

This masters' thesis sought to assess and analyse customer satisfaction with service quality (Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy), Trust and Reputation in the public hospitals in Jordan. Specifically, it examined the determinants of satisfaction and the effects of customer satisfaction on waiting time and medical care in Jordan's public hospitals. The study was a cross-sectional survey that used self-administered structured questionnaire to the target population of customers of universities (Yarmouk University and Jordan University of Science and Technology, JUST) employees who they visit the two public hospitals (King Abdullah Hospital and Princess Basma Hospital) in Jordan. Out of the two hundred and forty- two questionnaire administered, 242 usable questionnaires were obtained constituting 93% for analysis. SPSS software package version 19.0 to test the descriptive analysis and reliability, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) which is Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 19.0 to test the hypothesis. The study found that a total of three main hypotheses and five sub hypotheses were formulated and the results showed that all hypotheses are supported. Moreover, Service Quality, Trust and Reputation were found to have significant and positive impact on Customer Satisfaction. The implications of the study to management and theory are discussed and recommendations for future research have been made. The limitations of the study are also noted.

Keyword: Customer Satisfaction, Reputation, Service Quality, Trust.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study provides an overview and organization of service quality, trust, and reputation on customer satisfaction in non-profit organizations, specifically in Jordanian public hospitals. This chapter begins with a discussion on the background of the study, and then it discusses the research problem, questions, and objectives. It highlights the significance and scope of the study and the definitions of terms, and it concludes with the organization of research chapters.

1.2 Background of the Study

An increasing interest in hospital services has been observed in recent years; the standards of living have changed, and a demand for better medical care should be addressed to improve lifestyles (Barry, Chacko, Lee, Steiner & Kutner, 2006). Improving the quality of medical care services has become a primary concern for patients, and service quality has become increasingly important for hospitals to satisfy and retain their patients and provide them with better service (Arasli, Ekiz, Haktan & Salih 2008). Meehan, Bergen, and Stedman (2002) highlighted the improvement of the existing health care system and the enhancement of service quality from understanding patient evaluation of the performance of hospital service quality that will subsequently increase the number of patients who continue to visit their hospitals (Arasli et al., 2008; Badri, Attia & Ustadi, 2008).

In addition, patients who value the hospital food services are more likely to be loyal to the hospital (Kessler & Mylod, 2011). However, hospitals that fail to understand the importance of delivering quality service and patient satisfaction may be inviting a possible decline in patients (Thom, Hall & Pawlson, 2004). In this situation, patient satisfaction has been regarded as a fundamental determinant in maintaining long-term patient behaviour (Anthanasopoulos, Gounaris, & Sathakopoulos, 2001). In other words, satisfied customers are more likely to be retained (Cengiz, & Krikbir, 2007) and are more willing to recommend (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Moreover, patients are becoming more open to competitive advances and more familiar with health care services; thus, service quality alone may be insufficient to ensure a long-term relationship between the patients and the hospital (Gaur, Xu, Quazi & Nandi 2011).

Patient satisfaction has emerged as an increasingly important health issue. Satisfaction is believed to be an attitudinal response to value judgments that patients make about their clinical encounter (Boureaux & O'Hea, 2004). Satisfaction is either implicitly or explicitly defined as an evaluation based on the fulfilment of expectations (Choi, Cho, Lee, Lee & Kim, 2004). In the viewpoint of research, satisfaction pertains to the expectations of the customer who judges and, ultimately, accepts or rejects the hospital service (Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000).

Patient satisfaction regarding health care is a multidimensional concept that is currently becoming a crucial health care issue (Howard, Goertzen, Hutchison, Kaczorowski & Kelly, 2007). Analysis of satisfaction with medical care revealed the following aspects for patient satisfaction and overall performance of an organization: quality, trust, reputation, continuity, competence, information, organization, facilities, attention to psychosocial problems, humaneness, and outcome of care (Hausman, 2004). All of these factors have a high influence on the service quality of health care organizations

and simultaneously influence the satisfaction level. Moreover, technological advancement in recent years has dramatically changed the practices of health care service providers (Kilbourne, Duffy, Duffy & Giarchi, 2004). The health care system, normally dominated by both public and private hospitals, is now provided increasingly by the private sector (Lin, Xirasagar & Laditka, 2004). This phenomenon creates competition among public and private hospitals in satisfying patients by improving their service quality, building trust, and improving a positive reputation. Some questions were raised to achieve these valuable goals in health care organizations (Thom et al., 2004), namely, improving the service quality of health care, changing and innovating new techniques, and improving friendly services, positive feedback, communication, interaction, and trust. Therefore, organizations should emphasize and respond to these issues to allow them to gain a positive reputation in society (Mattila, 2001).

Majority of the researchers use SERVQUAL model to measure satisfaction, and a few studies focused on trust. In fact, trust is important in health care service organizations (Mechanic & Meyer, 2000) because it is the fundamental aspect of measuring the attributes of a physician that are grouped into several domains of technical competency, interpersonal competency, and agency (commonly known as fidelity, loyalty, or fiduciary duty) (Thom et al. 2004). Trust is a crucial factor that builds and establishes through continuous improvement in overall service quality dimension and organizational reputation (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

In addition to service quality and trust, reputation likewise plays a significant role in patient satisfaction, in which according to Werner & Kunz (2010), describing and explaining the concept of reputation has become an important criterion. Flow of information from one user to another can be established; therefore, transactions between an entity and other parties must have occurred to establish a good reputation. Reputation

is a process or a state that is built through continuous improvement in service quality dimensions to successfully meet the needs and wants of customers (patients) (Johansson, Oleni & Fridlund, 2002).

Organizations with positive reputations provide a high quality of service and have numerous customers (Caruana, Ramasashan & Krentler, 2004). They maintain long-term sustainability and have more patients from the high satisfaction levels that are based on credibility, quality, and service (Hong & Yang, 2009). The current study investigates the effects of service quality, reputation, and trust on patient satisfaction in public hospitals. The combination of this variable with the unknown variables in literature intends to close the gap within this area in the field of health care service providers.

1.3 Problem Statements

The world gross national product (GNP) toward the service sector, which amounts to approximately 85% of the GNP, is unprecedented within the last decade (Chang, Weng, Chang & Hsu, 2006). World economies are gradually metamorphosing from product-dominated manufacturing economies to service and intellectual knowledge economies (Chenet, Dagger & O'Sullivan, 2010). These feats are achieved in several service industries as a result of increasing customer affluence, greater demand for superior services, and higher standards of living in society (McDougall & Levesque, 2000).

The growing trend of consumerism among healthcare consumers has called for the challenge to investigate the extent to which healthcare providers fulfil the needs and expectations of consumers (Zeithaml, 2000). Healthcare service providers are

determined to maximize their patient satisfaction, and this factor is necessary for achieving sustainable competitive advantage and creating market niche and reputation (Andaleeb, 2001). Hence, examining patient satisfaction is regarded as a part of the main focus of health care on service quality, staff (doctors and nurses), and an established reputation (Taylor & Bengner, 2004).

However, service quality attributes using SERVQUAL model alone cannot result in patient satisfaction in health care sectors (Davies & Rundall, 2000), but other variables such as trust and reputation are critically important. Therefore, health care providers should improve every dimension of service quality, establish trust, and achieve high reputation to gain high levels of patient satisfaction (Choi, Lee, Kim, & Sunhee, 2005).

The present study likewise attempts to assess the perception of the patient regarding service quality in Jordanian public hospitals and explore their extent of service quality, trust, and reputational influence on patient satisfaction. The rise of health care service providers increases trends of new challenges, namely, in the provision of quality health services, in the need for customer or patient satisfaction, and in increased competition (Bhat & Malik, 2007), to which health care institutions can pay more attention in developing effective means of satisfying the desires and needs of patients (Eleuch, 2011). Therefore, the role of health care sectors in the lives of every individual cannot be overemphasized.

Service quality is the principal issue that has constantly gained the interest of the service industry (Li, Huang & Yang 2011) because the issue is related to customer satisfaction, which cannot be treated with levity. Therefore, service quality and customer satisfaction can certainly stabilize organizations in the service industry (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

The population of Jordan is composed of approximately 6.4 million (6,350,000) inhabitants, of whom 82% live in cities, whereas the rest live in rural and desert areas. Amman, the capital city of Jordan, accommodates roughly 38% of the total population, with 73% of the population of the Kingdom covered by the health insurance scheme. Health insurance coverage is shared by 31% civil health insurance members, 26% military health insurance members, and 21% members covered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Jafra, 2012). A total of 5% members are treated at the University Hospital, whereas 17% are covered by private health insurance (National Health Strategy, 2006).

The major problem faced by Jordanian public hospitals is the suffering of service quality from the increasing number of refugees from various Arab countries, especially from Syria. Since the beginning of the unrest in 2011, Jordan has received an influx of Syrians refugees. According to the Ministry of Health of Jordan (2011), more than 190,000 Syrians have sought refuge in the country. Jordan is receptive to Syrians and has a favourable protection climate that has supported the population movement. Syrian nationals are freely distributed throughout Jordan, with the largest concentrations in the border areas of Irbid and Mafraq, different from their Iraqi-refugee counterparts who are clustered in the capital of Amman. With the intensification of the conflict from July 2012 onwards caused a surge in the number of refugees. The Ministry of Health recorded that in August 2013, more than 1,000 patients received treatment per day in public hospitals. Moreover, the Jordanian government allowed Syrian refugees to have access to the public health system (clinics and hospitals). However, the access is limited to consultation only because patients, on their own, have to purchase the prescribed drugs and pay for the treatment for chronic diseases or conditions that require the care of a specialist or hospitalization (as reported by refugees with first-hand experience).

Although not all of the refugees are in need, many of them arrived in Jordan with little or no resources to meet these requirements.

Jordan is a low- to middle-income country in a semi-arid climate with limited natural resources. Approximately 75% of the country (in the eastern region) is covered by the Arabian Desert. Jordan is ranked 95th (out of 187 countries) in the Human Development Index (2010), which has a classification of “medium” development. The Ministry of Health (2012) likewise reported that its budget was cut by 14.58% in 2012 following the decrease in government revenue by 59.2 million (Jordanian Dinnar) in 2011. Although the budget allocation by the Jordanian government is reduced for public hospitals, the number of patients treated in public hospitals increased (Al-Tai, Hamid & Al-Alaq, Bashir, 2009). The insufficient operating budget and the inadequate size of nursing staff to meet the increasing demand for health services have possibly decreased the quality of care in these public hospitals.

The decrease in quality can jeopardize human life and well-being, and thereby decrease public trust in the health care system (Al-Tai, Hamid, Al-Alaq& Bashir, 2009). The quality of health care services is a major concern of the Jordanian government and public hospital administrators. The present health service policies have set the target of upgrading the quality of service of public hospitals in all of the provinces by promoting competition and self-management under government control. A related study by Abbadi, Abd and Mohamed (2007) stated that the service quality in public hospitals was weak, which induced patient dissatisfaction. Given the high of cost of living and low pay, Jordanian medical staff members are influenced to migrate to the other Gulf States (Saraya, 2013). This situation has affected the service quality in providing care and treatment to patients in public hospitals.

As previously mentioned, most Syrian refugees registered with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) can only access the public health system at the consultation level. However, once the patients have been diagnosed with a type of sickness, the patient is responsible for purchasing drugs and paying for the treatment of other chronic conditions in a specialist clinic. These reasons can certainly affect the service quality, trust, and reputation of public hospitals.

This study critically evaluates the factors that contribute to patient satisfaction in public hospitals. In terms of increasing the performance of a hospital, service quality, in terms of tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy, would play a major role in achieving high levels of performance and patient satisfaction. The effect of trust and reputation on patient satisfaction from the viewpoint of patients in public hospitals is another issue that this study addresses.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan? This question has five sub questions, which include the following:

1.1 What is the relationship between tangible and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan?

1.2 What is the relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan?

1.3 What is the relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan?

1.4 What is the relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan?

1.5 What is the relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan?

2. What is the relationship between trust and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan

3. What is the relationship between reputation and patient satisfaction in Jordanian public hospitals?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objective of this research, whose specific tasks are outlined below, is to investigate whether service quality, combined with trust and reputation, is related to patient satisfaction.

1- To determine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan. The first objective has five sub-goals which follows:

1.1 To identify the relationship between tangible and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan.

1.2 To explore the relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan.

1.3 To investigate the relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan.

1.4 To examine the relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan.

1.5 To determine the relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan.

2- To identify the relationship between trust and customer satisfaction in public hospitals in Jordan.

3- To assess the relationship between reputation and patient satisfaction in Jordanian public hospitals.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study comes from the relative significance of service quality in achieving patient satisfaction. In addition, the importance of trust and the reputation of hospitals as an important sector in service delivery are required for social development. The importance of service quality in public hospitals cannot be underrated because the goal is to provide a social service. In fact, trust and reputation would reduce the complexity for the patients and enable them to better cope with uncertainty and risks from their health conditions. This research is a preliminary step that provides further studies with factors that require satisfying the needs and wants of patients. It can provide the government with information on the satisfaction level of the Jordanian community. This information can alert the government to formulate several measures for handling this issue, which is related to the annual budget and the increase of refugees from Arab-neighbouring countries.

The findings of this study will assist the hospital management by providing them with several quality measures for overcoming this problem. A special budget and measures