



Patient' Satisfaction is More than Achieving Business Goal

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Introduction

In marketing literature satisfaction is considered core to the theory and practice of marketing. It is believed that retaining customer may be more profitable than attracting one. In healthcare, patient's satisfaction plays more important role not only to patients' retention and referral, but also to other aspects. This short review will be arranged starting with satisfaction in general and then followed by role of patient's satisfaction in healthcare.

Satisfaction

The marketing literature originally saw consumer satisfaction as being an outcome resulting from the consumption experience. Currently, the most dominant of the conceptual models of consumer satisfaction is disconfirmation. Oliver [1] defines satisfaction as "the consumer's fulfilment response" a post consumption judgment by the consumer that a service provides a pleasing level of consumption-related fulfilment, including under- or over-fulfilment". Satisfaction is consumer positive affective response to relationship exchange [2].

Consumer satisfaction is at the very core of marketing theory and practice [3]. Since retaining customers may be more profitable than attracting new ones, dissatisfied customers may lead to unfavorable behavior intentions such as negative word of mouth, doing less business or switching to alternative service provider [4].

Most prominent concept of antecedent of satisfaction is service quality. It is said that satisfaction will be influenced by how service provider deliver the RATER factors (Zeithalm et al. 1990). The first factor is reliability. It concerns how organization deliver the agreed upon services consistently, accurately and on time. The second factor is assurance. It concerns how employee able to communicate their knowledge to customer convincingly. Third factor is tangible. It talks about how the physical aspect of the service appealing. Forth factor is empathy. Are employee having the ability to empathize and give attention to customer? Last one is responsiveness. It concerns about how quick the organization respond to customer inquiries.

Researchers have found that besides quality evaluation, fairness is another important factor which influences satisfaction [1]. Oliver and Swan (1988) in [5] confirm that as disconfirmation of expectation, fairness has been considered as an important predictor of satisfaction. Generally speaking, we can assume that patients are satisfied when they perceived treatment is being fair.

Customer develop attitude toward products or services if they have consumed or having experience with products or services. Previous consumption and experiences will develop the like or dislike to the products and services. Therefore, satisfaction play important role to the behavior post-consumption such as repurchase intention [1].

The intimate relationship connecting satisfaction to loyalty is widely acknowledged in the marketing literature. Studies show that satisfied customers are more likely to be loyal than dissatisfied ones ((Fornell, 1992; Fornell and Wernefelt, 1987; Parasuraman et al., 1991; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990) in [6]). Indeed, satisfaction has proved to be a major antecedent to loyalty (Bitner, 1990; Dick and Basu, 1994; Fornell et al, 1996) in [6]. Satisfaction has been suggested to be a direct antecedent of loyalty in studies from various industry (Poujol et al, 2013; Lee, Moon, Kim and Yi, 2015; Kandampully and Zang, 2014; Kim, Vogt and Knutson, 2015; Orel and Kara, 2014). The impact of satisfaction of patients will be discuss in the following section.

Impact of Patient's Satisfaction in Healthcare

Patients' satisfaction is an important indicator to evaluate the achievement of public service system [7]. The most common way to evaluate the new program initiatives or get public confirmation for policy innovation is with investigating public satisfaction. Understanding how satisfy patients' are with new program, link to the effectiveness of program implementation.

Greater involvement of consumer in this case, patients, in the healthcare process is important. Studies show that there is

exist relationship demonstrated between satisfaction and patient compliance. That patient compliance includes in areas such as appointment keeping, intentions to comply with recommended treatment and medication use. The more satisfied the patients are, the more compliance they will be. Since it is shown that the high-quality clinical outcome is influenced by compliance, which indirectly, it depends on patients' satisfaction. Therefore, patients' satisfaction should be seen as the ultimate healthcare goal and thus a pre-requisite of quality care. Or it can be said simply that "care cannot be high quality unless patient is satisfied" [3]. Patients' satisfaction is also important to improve treatment outcome [8].

Patients' satisfaction affects healthcare providers financially through referral and reimbursement. Satisfied patients will be loyal customers which means sustainable flow of income. Retaining patients is also more profitable than attracting one. Other advantage of loyal patients is good word-of-mouth. Patient can be expected to 'promote' healthcare facility and produce referral.

Patients' satisfaction has also been linked to unsolicited complaints and medical malpractice lawsuits [9]. In their study, it is showed that the decreases in physician's satisfaction rate associated with the increased rate of unsolicited patients' complaints. Compared to physicians with high satisfaction rating, middle and bottom satisfaction rate have 26% and 110% higher malpractice lawsuits [10-13].

Conclusion

In marketing literature satisfaction is considered core to the theory and practice of marketing. It is believed that retaining customer may be more profitable than attracting one. In healthcare, patient's satisfaction plays more important role. Studies show that patients' satisfaction is not only important to keep patients coming back, but it is also as a tool to evaluate how effective one particular program being implemented; it also plays important role since patients' satisfaction link to treatment outcome; Patients' satisfaction has also been linked to unsolicited complaints and medical malpractice lawsuits.

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